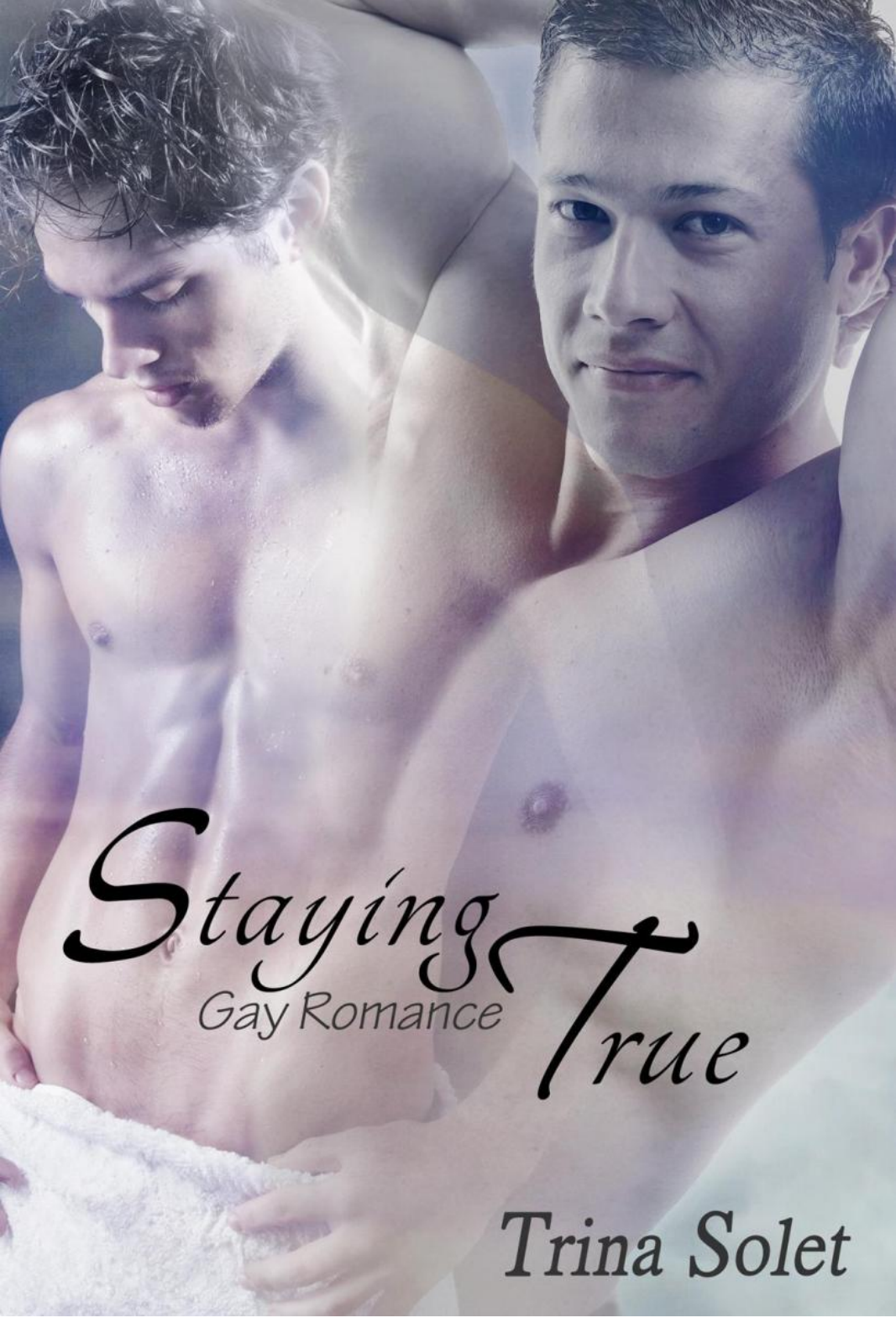
Staying True
Gay Romance
Trina Solet

Staying True (Gay Romance)

By Trina Solet

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Staying True

Gay Romance

Trina Solet

Chapter 1

"Hey, Spence. By all means feel free to sleep in, go to work late and get fired so I can kick your lazy ass out of here."

Hearing the voice coming through his door, Spencer grumbled into the wonderful, soft pillow that nestled his head. He heard a barrage of knocking. As his bedroom door opened, the voice telling him to get up got louder.

Spencer tried to muffle the irritating voice by hiding his head under his beloved pillow. With absolutely no compassion or human feeling, Greg snatched it away. He was a tall, redheaded tyrant and the worst alarm clock anybody ever had.

Of course Spencer had slept right through his actual alarm going off. Unwillingly, he took a peek at the time. He had forty-five minutes till he had to be at work. He only needed twenty. That was plenty of time for a five minute shower and then a sprint to work. Why was Greg waking him already?

"Did you forget the new roomie is moving in today? Get your crap out of the other bedroom," Greg told him just in time to answer his question before Spencer had to ask and admit that he had forgotten.

As Spencer was rising to sit up in slow motion and swinging his legs off the bed, he realized he didn't have as much time as he thought. He was storing a few things in the empty room next to his. Now he would need to find space for them in his own cramped bedroom.

Grabbing a towel, he slung it over one shoulder and went to take a shower. As he got into the bathroom, he slowly absorbed what Greg just said about the new roomie. A roomie was an actual person who would be living with them. It was one more guy sharing the same space with him and Greg.

Greg was the landlord of sorts since the apartment was in his name. And because he was a total tyrant, Spencer didn't even get to meet the new roomie before Greg gave him a thumbs up. He wondered if there was any chance in hell that a new roommate could be a good thing. It would be a huge bonus if he was hot, obviously.

Spencer stepped under the shower then turned it on. He gasped as the spray of cold water hit him like icy needles and woke him up fully. Being awake sucked. He soaped up and shampooed his hair as the water gradually got warmer.

Since Greg got him up earlier than he would have liked, Spencer decided he had time to jerk off. As he slid his hand down his slim body, he thought about that imaginary, very hot roomie. He pictured him right there in the shower with him. They could save time and water if they showered together.

While he ran his soapy hands over his own body, Spencer thought about lathering up a hard muscled roommate. He could knead his bulging muscles. The imaginary sensation of supple yet hard flesh under his hands overlapped with the feel of stroking his dick.

The roomie turned to him, his cock jutting out, hard. With the man's hands

heavy on his shoulders, Spencer kneeled down. The man took Spencer's face in his hands and pulled him forward. Spencer drew in one last deep breath then gasped as he came and leaned his forehead against the wet tiles. That fantasy ended too soon, but it felt oh so good. Now the real roommate he was about to meet was sure to be a huge disappointment.

It was probably going to be some skinny geek just like Spencer.

After some more rushed scrubbing and rinsing, Spencer stepped out of the shower. He threw down a towel so he wouldn't drip all over the tiles and have to listen to Greg screaming at him that he was flooding the place. Looking at himself in the mirror as he dried his hair, Spencer wondered what kind of impression he would make on their new roomie.

Pushing his hair off his eyes, Spencer grumbled. What he saw in the mirror sure wasn't anyone's dream roommate. His curly, dark hair was always falling over his eyes because he hated how it looked whenever he cut it. He sometimes got compliments on his dark eyes just because people wanted to say something nice and they couldn't exactly compliment his pecs. His body was hopeless.

Maybe that's why he was into guys with some muscle. Spencer was flexing and nodding at himself with approval when Greg yelled at him to hurry up. He jumped then reminded himself that Greg couldn't see him making a fool of himself.

Spencer was in his room, zipping up his pants when Greg shouted an update.

"He's coming up now, and your stuff is still in there. Move your skinny ass," Greg told him.

"It's just a few boxes. I'll get them out now," Spencer yelled back.

While bending down to put on his shoes, Spencer briefly checked himself out in the full length mirror that hung on the back of his door. He might be on the skinny side, but his ass was OK. Some even called it cute.

Done admiring his own ass like some insecure weirdo, Spencer went over to the room he had been using as a storage closet. Not that it was small. It was the same size as his own and furnished with the same kind of bed, dresser, chair and small desk under the window.

Since he didn't want to be yelled at again, Spencer got to work. One by one, he dragged the boxes to his own room. The whole time he was wondering if they even held anything he needed. They were heavy, like they had in them every book he ever read.

Spencer fit the boxes in his own room the best he could and silently promised to go through them later. A part of him laughed heartily at that promise. He was going to be tripping over those boxes as long as he lived here, and after that probably dragging them every place he moved. He just didn't know how to let go.

Stopping for a minute in the kitchen, Spencer tossed back a couple of handfuls of dry cereal straight from the box, and gulped down some coffee, and he was all set. Breakfast of champions also known as the breakfast of don't want to be late and get fired.

Now it was time to head to work, so Spencer patted himself down to make sure he had his keys, his phone, and his wallet. As he walked down the stairs with his phone in hand, he was checking his texts and emails when he heard footsteps heavier and slower than his own coming up the steps. He looked up from his phone just in time to see... No way.

Walking up the stairs was a mirage. The man Spencer saw coming toward him couldn't be the roommate. He was pure fantasy straight out of Spencer's poor, feverish imagination. He might even be a dream. Maybe Spencer was still asleep. Whether awake or asleep, he had to take stock of what he was looking at.

He stared from the top of the man's head of brown hair to his smiling brown eyes on a gorgeous face. His gaze moved down the somewhat thick neck, the broad shoulders, well muscled arms, then a magnificent chest covered with a plain white t-shirt that Spencer wanted to rip off.

The jeans would also have to go. Spencer could just imagine the goodies hiding under them, and not just between his legs. He knew those legs were something by the way the jeans stretched over them. Those were muscular, bulging thighs that Spencer wanted to grab hold of as he sucked the life out of this guy, whoever he was. Not the roommate though because that was impossible.

As he stood there gaping, Spencer should have been embarrassed by spacing out while his brain switched to an all porn channel. But seriously, when a guy looks like that, you stare, you drool, you fantasize and you apologize later. Finally noticing that the total hunk was carrying a box, Spencer got out of his way.

"Thanks," the hunk said and smiled. And what a sunny smile on that gorgeous face. Spencer just melted inside.

That couldn't be him. He wasn't the new roomie. He was someone who was helping the new roomie move in. Spencer almost decided to call in sick anyway so he could spend some time with this very helpful friend. He could watch this guy bringing in boxes and bending over to set them down. Too bad Spencer couldn't do that. He valued his job. It paid the rent after all.

As Spencer looked after him regretfully, the guy turned. He looked down at Spenser from a few steps up. His muscles bulged beautifully as he held that box, and he flashed Spencer another awesome smile. Unable to look away, Spencer kept staring after him and saw his ass flex as he walked up.

Even after he was gone, Spencer stared up at nothing like a total idiot. That's when he heard the guy's deep but mellow voice as he greeted Greg and then Greg's familiar gruff, nagging tone as he ordered him around and told him the

rules of the house. Wait. Why did this guy need to know the rules?

Spencer could think of only one reason. That hunk was their new roomie after all. Spencer couldn't believe it.

Spencer walked down the stairs with a goofy smile plastered on his face. And to think it would be hours before he got to come home from work. Stepping out onto the street in front of their apartment building, Spencer took a breath of cool, early morning air. He took another big lungful to sober him up a little and help him let go of crazy fantasies. Even if he was the new roomie, that man was out of reach for a skinny, nerdy guy like him.

Look but don't touch – that's how it was going to be. The new guy was like that midnight blue sports car that just sped past. It got Spencer's attention and his eyes followed it until it made a fast turn at the end of the block. He admired it, but he knew he couldn't have a car like that. Things like that were just something for Spencer to dream about. Just like he was going to be dreaming about his new roommate whether he wanted to or not.

A hot guy who was out of his league living right under his nose to torture him – it was just like Greg to set him up like that. It sure was going to be weird to have him sleeping in the bedroom next door, hopefully naked. Maybe he sleepwalked. Spencer found himself grinning again until he realized he was going to be late for work if he didn't hurry up and get a move on. Obviously it was going to take more than a lungful of fresh air to get Spencer to let go of his crazy fantasies.

The way he spent the rest of the day proved him right. Spencer made sandwiches while on autopilot. He hardly knew what anyone said to him or how he answered. At one point he realized that Greg never told him the new roommate's name. Spencer spent all day trying to guess it. While making one more grilled chicken sandwich, he decided that he looked like a Liam. With those pretty brown eyes and brown hair and all those muscles, he was definitely the Liam of Spencer's dreams.

When he was done with work, Spencer didn't even consider stopping anywhere on his way home. Usually he might grab something for dinner, browse a bookstore or stop by Marlene's place, but not today. There was a new roomie waiting at home for him, hopefully. If it turned out that he was out, Spencer was going to be very unhappy.

Rushing home and then taking the stairs two at a time, he arrived at his apartment door a little out of breath. His hand on the doorknob, he took a moment to breathe. He told himself that the roomie might not even be home. Still in a state of high excitement, he walked in.

There he was, the new roomie in all his masculine glory. He was surrounded by boxes and wearing ear buds attached to the phone in his back pocket. Busy listening to music and tilting the boxes so he could read the handwritten

labels, he didn't notice Spencer as he entered.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, Spencer had himself a good long stare. To make sure that the man was real and not a figment of his imagination, Spencer looked for imperfections. There was a scar from a cut on his chin and a bruise on his forearm. His eyebrows were a little too bushy, but that was just quibbling. Aha, his ears were uneven. The left one stuck out a little more.

As Spencer was noticing that about him and memorizing everything else, the new roomie turned. Those sweet brown eyes looked up at him and there was the smile from this morning, just as sunny and bright. This man wasn't exactly the one he had envisioned while he jerked off in the shower. He was better. He was real. His name probably wasn't even Liam. It might be Bob or something.

"What's your name?" Spencer blurted out. Then he offered his hand over the boxes that separated him from his roommate. "Sorry. I'm Spencer. I should have introduced myself when I saw you this morning, but I was rushing to work," he said apologetically and not at all truthfully. That morning, he didn't even think of introducing himself. He was too busy ogling him and trying to decide if he was real or a dream.

The roommate took out the earbuds and paused whatever he had been listening to as he took Spencer's hand. "Hi. Nice to meet you. I'm Troy." There was that wonderful, mellow voice that Spencer remembered. It sounded even better while his hand was squeezed in Troy's strong grip.

"Troy. OK. Nice to meet you too," Spencer said, trying to get used to the idea that his Liam was actually named Troy. Not a bad name. He could learn to live with it. Troy did have a nice way of speaking, his voice low and pleasant, kind of intimate but without trying to be. He seemed very casual and easygoing. Also his eyes were sweet and smiling as he looked at Spencer, who was staring at him like an idiot.

"Sorry. I'm kind of tired and spacey. I've been making sandwiches all day at Breadworks and didn't get to eat anything," Spencer told him.

Troy didn't think that made a lot of sense. "How do you make sandwiches all day and come home hungry?" he wondered as he checked inside one of his boxes.

"Being around food all day, it kind of takes away my appetite." That was the truth, but he didn't tell him that he was in a rush to get home after work and that's why he didn't stop anywhere. "You want anything? I make a mean sandwich. You could even say I'm a professional," Spencer said as he headed into the small kitchen.

"No. I had something with Greg earlier. Thanks," Troy said.

Since Troy didn't want anything, Spencer didn't feel like making anything for himself either. He grabbed a pink and red apple from the bowl and bit into it. He sat on a bar stool and watched Troy unpacking.

"Sorry about having my stuff all over," he said to Spencer. "If I opened up the boxes in my room, I wouldn't be able to turn around much less put

anything away."

Spencer was ready to tell him to go ahead and move into his room. Instead he told Troy not to worry about it. "I don't mind a little mess. It's Greg you have to worry about."

"He sounds like he runs a tight ship," Troy said with a smile.

"Oh, he does." As Spencer munched on the apple and washed it down with a bottle of iced tea, he noticed that a lot of the boxes were empty and Troy was starting to take the last of his stuff to his room.

Troy went in and out of his bedroom a few times as Spencer watched him. He just couldn't help himself. He was mesmerized by the ripples of his muscles as he moved. All that strength packed into one body was a beautiful sight. Spencer could watch him move for hours, but he should probably offer to help since he was done eating and the core from his apple was going in the trash.

"Can I give you a hand with anything?" Damn, he shouldn't have put it like that. Now he was picturing giving Troy a very thorough handjob. As Troy turned to him, Spencer had to try and look perfectly innocent.

Standing in the middle of the living room, Troy now took stock of all the cardboard boxes littering the place. "I'm not sure what to do with the empty boxes."

That was something Spencer could deal with. "I'll help you collapse them and carry them down. If you put them by the curb, they'll be gone by tomorrow. Someone is always moving around here with all these little apartment buildings up and down the street."

"This is a nice area," Troy said as they started on the boxes. "Other places I was looking at weren't like this. With what I make, I thought I would have to live in some converted closet over a meth lab. This place is not bad at all."

"Here all you have to worry about are the roommates," Spencer said as he kicked in the sides of one box.

"You and Greg? You guys seem all right," Troy said and gave him one of his disarming smiles. One more like that and Spencer was going to get addicted to them.

Once the boxes were flattened and leaning against a lamppost in front of their building, Spencer and Troy went back up. To his credit, Spencer was a gentleman and didn't make sure to follow Troy on the way up the stairs so he could stare at his perfect ass. He deserved a medal.

Spencer looked around the living room for any sign of the earlier mess. He didn't want Troy to get in trouble with Greg on his first day. "Looks good," he said to Troy after checking. "Now Greg will not wring your neck."

"Thanks for the help," Troy told him and went to his bedroom.

Since he didn't close his bedroom door, Spencer felt it was OK to bug him and went to stand in his doorway. Troy sat down in the middle of his room with books, DVDs, Blu-rays and games piled around him in messy stacks.

Spencer also noticed some weights in the corner.

"Doesn't look too bad in here either," Spencer said peering in at him. His room was already pretty organized. It was the same furniture that had been there before, but now it didn't look so impersonal with Troy's stuff filling it.

"I had a half day at work, just orientation on my first day, so I managed to get most of it done," Troy said.

"Except for those," Spencer pointed out some framed sketches leaning against the wall.

Troy turned to look at them. "I have a feeling they'll be leaning there forever if I don't put them up now. Do you have any nails?"

"I don't but Greg probably does. I'll rummage around."

When Spencer came back with some assorted nails and a hammer, he got a closer look at the sketches. They were rough silhouettes of naked men. Spencer started to think that Troy was definitely gay. Greg had told him that the new roomie was "probably gay" and promised to double-check that info. Spencer didn't want to question Troy about that. Instead he asked, "You aren't an artist, are you?"

"Me? Oh, no. A friend gave them to me. They are..." Troy thought about it for a while then settled on one word. "Important."

"That sounds intriguing. Maybe you'll tell me about them some time."

"I definitely will. I'm a big blabbermouth." Troy was looking at the sketches kind of wistfully when they heard Greg come in through the front door. Spencer cursed him silently though he had no right to. It's not like he was interrupting a makeout session between him and Troy.

Greg announced that he had groceries and that his arms were going to fall off, so Spencer went out to help him. As soon as he was standing next to him in the kitchen, Greg started interrogating him.

"What were you up to in there?"

"Nothing. What are you accusing me of?" Spencer shot back while he handed Greg the stuff that went in the fridge.

"Tread carefully. He's a newbie," Greg said in a voice full of foreboding.

"A newbie at what?" Spencer wanted to know.

"You'll find out," Greg said with a wink. He was being mysterious, the sadist. Spencer looked toward Troy's bedroom and his head was full of questions. Honestly, he wanted to know every last thing about that man.

Chapter 2

Now that he was done unpacking, Troy took a good look around. The apartment was pretty nice and it wasn't too far from his work or the college he'd be starting in the fall. Until then he had most of the summer to do all the things he missed out on in his old life.

Maybe some of the action would happen right in this bedroom. That's what he thought as he eyed his new room. Both the bed and the room were a decent size. The window was big enough so that he could see past the green of the treetops and get a view up and down the street.

As for the rest of the apartment, the kitchen was narrow, separated from the living space by an island. It looked OK. Troy didn't cook often so the kitchen didn't interest him much. There were two bedrooms off the hallway and a bathroom that Troy and Spencer would share. Greg had a bigger bedroom and his own bathroom on the other side of the apartment.

The comfortable looking living room was decorated in brown, beige and some blue. The TV in there wasn't bad at all. Troy could see himself stretching out on that couch while hanging out with Spencer and maybe Greg. Not that he was playing favorites with his roommates.

OK, he was definitely playing favorites, and that Spencer was easy to be with. Greg was like sitting around with his boss. Troy could already hear him yelling about coasters and not putting his feet up on the coffee table.

So far Spencer was the best feature of the place. Troy could look at him all day. His lively, dark eyes and slim body already had his imagination in overdrive. Troy wanted to see those eyes look up at him as he was sinking deep inside his tight body. He wanted to see his face blushing and sweat slick as he panted and called out his name in a begging voice.

Fuck. He needed to get laid so damn hard. Until he met Spencer, he thought anyone good-looking would do. Now he was thinking, he should start by getting his roommate out of his system first, or he wouldn't be able to spend one minute in his new apartment without a permanent hard-on for him.

That's exactly what he had to deal with the next morning. Troy had to jerk off before he could even take one step out of his room. It didn't take long. Thinking about Spencer while he stroked really lit a fire under him, but he still missed his chance to get into the shower first. Spencer did have to be at his job earlier than Troy, so it made sense for him to be first in line.

As he stepped into the hall, Troy could hear the shower running. Now he couldn't help imagining Spencer in there. He pictured the rivulets of warm water sliding down his beautifully slender form. Troy wanted to run his soaped up hands up his legs until he took a firm hold of his hard cock.

To get away from pervy thoughts, Troy went into the kitchen to have some coffee from the pot Greg made for all of them. It was hot and too strong, but it didn't distract him from wishing he could see through the wall into the

bathroom.

What might he see in there? Maybe the soap would slip out of Spencer's hand. So clumsy. Spencer would need to bend way down to retrieve it. If Troy was in there with him, he could come up behind him, let his hard cock brush against Spencer's upturned ass.

"Good morning. Hope the coffee isn't too strong. Spencer is always complaining about it. He calls it the death metal of coffee," Greg said as he joined Troy in the kitchen.

Troy stammered that the coffee was fine. To cover his embarrassment, he asked if there was any cereal he could "borrow" until he bought his own.

"How are you going to borrow cereal exactly?" Greg asked him while handing him a box of some fruit and nut cereal that Troy was willing to eat only in an emergency. "You need me to lend you some milk too?"

"Yes, please," Troy said.

Right as he finished his cereal and put the bowl in the dishwasher, Troy heard the shower stop, and a little later the bathroom door opened. He eagerly watched for Spencer to come out, and he was rewarded with quite a sight.

Spencer was naked from the waist up with a blue towel tucked in around his narrow hips. Water droplets clung to the ends of his hair and to his golden skin. Troy wanted to lick every drop off him.

As Troy went to get ready for work, he tore his eyes away from him. That wasn't easy while Spencer was still lingering in the hallway, drying his hair with a baby blue towel. The hallway was narrow so the two of them were standing close, kind of getting in each other's way.

Now Troy had a much better view of him, and his eyes focused on the beads of water that dripped from his hair down his neck. He couldn't think straight with such a desirable guy within easy reach. He could imagine the feel of his skin smooth, warm and still a little damp from the shower. When Spencer looked at him with his eyelashes wet, Troy almost grabbed him and kissed him.

Spencer was about to go into his room, when Greg started scolding him.

"Spence, you need to remember you're sharing that bathroom now. Don't take all day in there and don't use up all the hot water," he nagged him then he turned to Troy. "The water heater is kind of small. I'm afraid you'll be taking a cold one," Greg told him.

"Oh, no. I'm sorry," Spencer said and gave Troy a puppy-dog look.

How could Troy not let him off the hook? "No worries. I have to make it quick anyway."

"Sorry," Spencer said again as Troy slung a towel over his shoulder and went into the bathroom.

At the bathroom door, he inhaled the steam from Spencer's shower. Troy's heart was pounding as he stood leaning against the door with the image of the wet Spencer still burning him up inside. Breathing in more of the scent of

shampoo and soap Spencer had used, he imagined smelling them on him mixed with the scent of his body. If he got that close, he would strip him of that towel so fast, tackle him to the bed and bury his face in his crotch.

Troy got rid of his clothes in record time, hurriedly got in the shower and turned it on. As advertised, the water coming from the shower started out lukewarm then turned cold and stayed that way. Troy let the cold water pour over his head and down his body. That's what he got for being the last to get into the shower. He smiled as the idea came to him that he might ask Spencer to share his shower time with him.

Turning his back to the stream of cool water, Troy let it soak in and sighed, but it didn't cool him off at all. He took his cock in his hand. With his eyes closed, he pictured Spencer kneeling down slowly right in front of him. Then he pictured him opening his mouth and looking up at him with his eyelashes wet and his eyes very dark as his pupils were blown.

Now Spencer was taking his cock in his mouth. As water ran down his back, Troy moaned and let the wet heat of Spencer's mouth replace his own hand. His cock going in and out between Spencer's lips was a beautiful sight. He came to that image, wishing it was real.

Chapter 3

Since Troy moved in, living in the same apartment where he had lived for months was a whole new deal for Spencer. Every time he came home, he was on pins and needles. Would Troy be there? Would he be half naked? Would he be totally naked? Would he ask Spencer to blow him? Would Spencer pass out from the shock or just go to it?

OK, none of that was going to happen.

That night, coming back from dinner with his friends, Spencer made another suspense filled entrance. He found that Greg and Troy were hanging out in the living room. Both were fully clothed. Greg was grinning at his phone as he texted and Spencer knew what that meant. Then Greg confirmed it.

"Good news for everyone. Joao is free and is taking me out for a late dinner, so the place is all yours now."

Spencer high-fived him.

"I was thinking of going out," Troy said. "Where do I go to meet guys around here?"

That reminded Spencer that Greg told him that Troy was new in town. He should have offered to show him around before Troy went out to meet other guys. Talk about a missed opportunity.

"You want a tour of the local hangouts, Spence is your man." Greg pointed a thumb at him.

Spencer was ready to jump at the chance, but he didn't like the way Greg put it or that version of his name either. "Don't make me sound like some kind of bar hopper."

"Just show him around. What do you want him to do, wander the streets alone?"

Spencer turned to Troy. "I'm not busy. What do you say?" he offered while trying not to sound too eager.

Troy grinned at him. "I'm ready to get out there. Show me the way."

He put on his shoes and he was ready to go. Spencer looked him over. The muscles of his chest and arms stretched the blue t-shirt Troy was wearing. Oh, yeah. He was ready.

"You want to start with the closest one? It's casual." Spencer figured he'd ease him into it.

"Sounds good."

"OK. We start with Bottleneck," Spencer said as he and Troy headed out the door. "It's just a short walk from here. If you don't like it, there are some other places not too far. It's mostly college bars, so they won't be crowded like when classes start."

"That sounds good. I want to go in on the shallow end," Troy said as he went down the narrow stairs ahead of Spencer.

"You want shallow? Spence is your man," Greg said from the top of the stairs.

Spencer craned his neck to glare at him. "Would you stop badmouthing me right to my face," he shouted at Greg then went out to catch up to Troy.

Troy was out on the sidewalk in front, waiting for Spencer to point him in the right direction. "I have to remember not to call you that," he said as they walked side by side down the dark street.

"What?" Spencer wasn't sure what awful things Greg might have called him, other than shallow.

"Spence. I can tell you don't like it," Troy said.

"Maybe I just don't like Greg." And I like you, Spencer almost said. He wanted to give Troy permission to call him whatever he wanted.

For the rest of their walk to Bottleneck, Spencer told Troy about the other bars he would find if he ventured farther out. It didn't take them long to get to their destination and push open the double doors that said bottle and neck.

Bottleneck wasn't anything to write home about, but Spencer liked it and not just because it was so close. The lights had a nice amber glow. The voices were happy. He saw plenty of smiling faces and eyes that shone with interest when they fell on Troy.

The two of them spotted an empty booth and grabbed it. That's when Spencer realized he didn't know how old Troy was.

"I forgot to ask if you can drink."

"Just turned legal in April. April 2nd. Missed out on being an April Fool's baby by one day. When I was a kid, I felt so gypped," Troy told him.

Spencer agreed, "Having a birthday on April 1st would rule." But then he reconsidered. "It would be gag gifts all the time. No. You dodged a bullet, my friend." Soon they each had a beer in front of them and he asked Troy, "How are you liking your job?" That wasn't in the top ten questions he wanted to ask, but it was the one least likely to get him in trouble.

"It's OK. It's money. I work at this car rental place. Mostly I work the phones. Sometimes I help clean the cars when we have to rush to get them ready. The pay isn't too bad."

Spencer told him about the sandwich place where he worked. "We do fresh baked bread and other stuff in the morning so it smells like heaven. There's a bakery in the back, but I have nothing to do with that. I just make the sandwiches."

"Maybe I'll drop by."

"Feel free," Spencer said to him. To keep himself from dwelling on how gorgeous Troy was, he wanted to keep the conversation going. "So what made you move here? School or something?"

"I was thinking it might be easier not to be near my family." He paused for a sip of his beer and then he turned the bottle in place a few times before he continued. "I just came out and things kind of went..." Troy shrugged. His eyes darkened and the muscles in his jaw worked.

He didn't finish explaining, but Spencer saw how it was. "It must be rough.

Sorry."

Troy shook his head like he didn't want his sympathy. "I put it off too long. I let them believe a lie until the truth was a big shock. My brother thought he could talk me out of being gay. My mom and dad don't want to see me until I come to my senses. That's why I can't be near them. From my old college, I could be home in twenty minutes easy. But being there and knowing that they might not even let me in through the door..." He shrugged again and made a face. "From here, it would take me more than half a day to get home. I can pretend it's the long drive that keeps me from seeing them and not the fear that I'll get the door slammed in my face."

"They might mellow out after they get used to the idea and see that there is no changing your mind," Spencer said to sound a note of hope.

"That would be nice, but I won't hold my breath."

Spencer decided to switch up the mood. "OK, let's see who's here that can cheer you up. If you like someone and I know the guy, I'll introduce you," Spencer offered though he was really hoping to keep Troy to himself as long as he could. Maybe he didn't need to worry just yet. The way he looked around, Troy didn't seem eager for an upgrade.

The atmosphere at Bottleneck was festive. The place was as full as it was going to get this time of year. Quite a few eyes were taking in the sight of the new guy, probably thinking it shouldn't be too hard to peel him away from someone like Spencer.

After taking a good look around him, Spencer shook his head. "Look at all the sharks circling, smelling fresh blood in the water."

"You'll protect me, right?" Troy said and pulled Spencer closer to him across the table by grabbing his forearm.

That was a surprise. The grip of his big hand made Spencer get both tight and wobbly inside. To cover up the sex-crazed need that Troy just jumpstarted, Spencer flexed his arm. That made Troy let go but now he was squeezing Spencer's biceps.

"Not bad," he said.

"For a skinny guy," Spencer finished for him.

Troy nodded and smiled.

"It's like a mosquito bite compared to yours," Spencer pointed out and Troy flexed his arm to prove him right. The bulge of his biceps had Spencer's full attention. Spencer squeezed his rock hard muscle and shook his head. "You're amazing."

Troy blushed like he never heard those words before. Maybe he didn't hear it much from guys if he only just came out.

"Didn't the girls compliment you at least?" Spencer asked.

"The girls I dated? Mostly they were annoyed that I didn't want to bone them."

I would be too, Spencer thought. He totally sympathized. It was like he was

one of those poor, wretched girls, out with Troy on what almost seemed like a date but with no chance in hell of getting any.

After he had another beer, Spencer started to feel more at ease with his lot in life. He sat back in the booth and gave himself permission to enjoy Troy's company. Troy might be out of his league, but he was nice to hang out with. His voice was rich and mellow, with the best laugh. His eyes were warm. He was probably the most gorgeous guy in the place, but Spencer couldn't vouch for that. He didn't want to look at anyone else to make sure.

It was too bad his family had been so shitty to him. Maybe his future would make up for it. That's what Spencer was thinking as Troy told him how much he was looking forward to college in the fall. "Next term is going to be different now that I'm out."

"That will be good news to plenty of guys. Hope you're ready to jump in with both feet." Spencer clinked his beer bottle against Troy's.

"Hope to be. This summer I'm planning on catching up, getting all the experience I missed out on," Troy told him.

Spencer wondered what he meant. "Missed out?"

"I told you. Before now, I was living a lie," Troy reminded him.

"The whole time?"

"I played the part 24/7. I've done nothing except with girls." Troy looked down at the tabletop shyly.

"Wow. Nothing? So that's what Greg meant by newbie," Spencer realized.

"People are calling me newbie?" Troy said raising his eyes to him with alarm.

"Either that or fresh meat," Spencer said with a smirk. Troy looked embarrassed. "No worries. Look around. Plenty of guys here would be happy to help you out. Just take your pick. And there's more than a few apps that can help you meet guys."

"I looked into that. It's not really for me." Troy glanced around but then he just shook his head and stared into Spencer's eyes. "I want to get in there. I don't know what's holding me back."

"It's new to you, but when you see a guy you really want, you'll dive in." Spencer checked around the bar for potential candidates. "What kind of guys are you into?"

Troy looked around again. Judging from the smile he wore, he seemed to like what he saw, but his eyes never settled on any one of the guys. He finally turned to Spencer and grinned sheepishly. "A bunch of these guys look good, but I would feel weird going up to a guy and asking him to get me started. And if I don't say anything about it being my first time, I'll have to pretend I know what I'm doing. I'm pretty sure I can't pull that off."

"OK, don't worry about it for tonight. Just enjoy the atmosphere."

"And the company," Troy added to be nice and raised his beer to salute Spencer. "So what was it like for you when you came out?" Troy asked and

leaned across the table like he wanted to hear every word.

"It happened in high school. I kind of felt like everyone already guessed, so it seemed stupid to hide it."

"Did people mess with you?" Troy asked, his brow furrowing with concern.

Spencer shrugged. "I had to deal with a few jerks, got pushed around a little, shoved into a wall once. Never saw who did it."

"Shit," Troy said looking grim and a little bit dangerous, like he was ready to kick some ass if only Spencer would give him the names of his high school tormentors.

"It's all part of being a gay nerd. But it wasn't all bad. Some friends really stuck by me, and my parents were great. Dad said, 'I always thought I'd be giving my boy advice on women. Now I'm kind of out of my depth.' I told him, 'I'm sure mom can tell me all I need to know about picking up guys.' I let him stew for a minute then I said, 'I mean, she picked you, didn't she? She must know what she's doing.'"

"Your dad sounds great," Troy said with a wistful smile.

"He's a nerd dad. And gay or straight, nerds are the same the world over," Spencer told him.

"Is that the secret?" Troy said, looking a little skeptical.

"Sure. Most of my guy friends are nerds. They just shrugged and said, 'Everyone thinks we're all gay anyway, so whatever.' Nerds have nothing to lose," Spencer claimed.

"Don't sell 'em short. I think you have some great friends and great parents."

"I needed them. It wasn't easy. I had the rest of high school to get through. Sometimes just walking down the hall was hell. And I never knew what might be on or in my locker. The things I found slipped in there through the gaps." Spencer shook his head.

"Makes me ashamed that I was such a stupid coward," Troy said regretfully.

Spencer didn't blame him though. "You didn't have the support system."

"Maybe I just picked bad parents."

"They might come around. Don't give up on them yet."

"Until then I need to stock up on some friends who aren't uncomfortable to be around me," Troy said.

"You can start with me," Spencer offered.

"That's a good start," Troy said with a smile.

Spencer lost count of how many beers they had while they talked. It wasn't too many, but being with Troy didn't leave his brain any room for counting. When they went out together earlier in the night, Spencer hadn't expected that they would tell each other about their lives. He thought there would be some forced chitchat and then Troy would ditch him for better company. Now they were leaving together and heading home.

Stepping through the doors of Bottleneck and out onto the sidewalk, Spencer

looked up past the glare of the lampposts to the starry sky. He took a big lungful of air to clear out the late night, stuffy smell of the bar that had gotten inside him. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed Troy doing the same thing as well as stretching his arms out. That did some nice things for his powerful chest.

Spencer had drunk just enough and stopped short of the stage of drunkenness when he might do something to make a fool of himself. That was a smart move considering the intoxicating influence of having Troy beside him.

"What else is around here?" Troy asked, looking up and down the street.

"I can show you the 24 hour drugstore where you can buy condoms all night and day," Spencer said and pointed out the way to the store.

"I plan to need a steady supply," Troy told him.

"Ambitious."

Troy beamed at him. Spencer could swear his brown eyes got more beautiful the more he looked at them, or maybe that was the beer talking.

Troy might have been halfway to drunk too, the way he leaned on Spencer with his muscled arm heavy over his shoulders. "Thanks for taking me out."

"Thanks for what? You didn't hook up," Spencer said while enjoying the closeness of Troy's big body more than he should.

"It's too much pressure. Who? What? Where? It was easier to just drink and hang out with you," Troy squeezed him a little tighter as they meandered on the empty sidewalk.

"Yeah, you are safe with me," Spencer said ruefully.

"Am I?" Troy asked and turned to him with a meaningful look.

For a while Spencer only stared into his smiling eyes. He hadn't even noticed that they were home until Troy pressed him into the doorway of their apartment building.

Chapter 4

Standing in the doorway, pressed up against Spencer, Troy wasn't sure what to do. With his mouth temptingly close, Troy could kiss him so easily. If only Spencer would give him some sort of signal that it was OK.

But he only stared wordlessly and Troy didn't know what to think. The feeling of having Spencer's eyes focused on him for so long made him feel warm and tingly inside.

To try and break the tension, Troy finally spoke up. "OK. So tell me what I'm missing. Let's start with the basics. Tell me what it's like to kiss a guy?" he asked Spencer in a hushed voice.

"You never kissed a guy?" Spencer said, his voice just as low and intimate. His lips were so luscious and then he licked them, parted them and stepped even closer. Troy blinked and lost his ability to breathe. He was so close. Troy felt dizzy. All he could see was Spencer's mouth and all he could hear was his own heart beating so loud that Spencer must hear it too.

Taking a slow, deep breath, Spencer leaned in. Troy angled his head toward that pretty mouth. Why did that last inch of space seem impossible to cross? He smelled beer as their breaths mixed. Troy watched Spencer's eyelashes as his eyes fell closed.

He didn't know how it happened. Their lips met and Troy was sure that he was no longer conscious. He had dropped into an oblivion of hot, silky lips and tongue gliding over his own forever. His tongue slid into Spencer's mouth, and he moaned around it, sucked on it.

Then, after only giving him a taste, Spencer pulled away. Troy wanted to drag him back, tell him not to stop. But he did have to stop to let Troy breathe.

Troy only now realized that he was completely out of breath, like all the air in his lungs had just been burned away. If Spencer hadn't stopped, Troy might have been gasping for breath. What an amateur.

"So what's it like to kiss a guy?" Spencer asked him in a whisper.

Troy tried to answer, but he just wanted to laugh and cry. What words could describe a feeling like that? He did manage to whisper a sort of answer. "It's hot."

Spencer smiled, closed the space between them again and gave him a hug. The warmth of his body infused him, and Troy had to tell himself to get a grip. It was just a friendly, drunk hug.

"Thank you," he said into Spencer's ear as he hugged him back too tight and too long.

Troy and Spencer made their way upstairs side by side on the narrow stairs, bumping into the railing and the walls. Despite Troy's half-drunk, feverish hopes, they parted ways at their bedroom doors.

After going to the bathroom to get rid of some of the beer he drank, Troy fell into bed with his clothes on. He did manage to pull the phone from his pocket

and toe off his shoes. With two loud thuds, they hit the floor at the foot of the bed.

He thought he would be dead asleep in seconds, but the feeling of that kiss wouldn't leave him. It came back to him in sudden tremors that didn't let him drift off. He suffered through a few aftershocks and realized there would be no sleep if he didn't jerk off first.

He ripped open his fly, and his hand got busy. He pictured Spencer's parted mouth and his closed eyes. Letting the kiss melt through him again, he started pumping into his own fist. It should have been Spencer he was thrusting into. That's what he really wanted.

In the end, his hand did the trick and his body curled forward as he shot come over his hand and his t-shirt. After carefully taking off his t-shirt and then using it to clean up, Troy slumped back into bed.

To think he never kissed a guy before. Even Troy found that hard to believe. Why did he do that to himself? Because he wanted his life to be easy, and for a while it was.

Troy wasn't used to struggling. School was easy for him, not that he ever challenged himself with advanced classes or anything. He liked sports and even played on the baseball team for a little while.

His straight friends assumed he was one of them. Most people didn't wonder about him, so he didn't wonder about himself. He wasn't super popular or anything, but he had plenty of friends. Too bad they all drifted away after he came out.

Before that, he picked up girls without having to try. He couldn't keep them for long though. They knew something was missing even if he didn't. The breakups never bothered him much though. That should have been a clue, but he wasn't in the habit of analyzing himself.

Even as he told them they were pretty, he didn't question why he didn't want to sleep with the girls he dated. The flash of a boob or a thigh didn't excite him. He didn't usually make a move on them until they got pissed at him.

While he ignored every signal his body sent him, one or two of the girls asked if he might be into guys. He denied it then, but it got so he couldn't deny it any more.

His parents were a different story. They had calmed down a little since their first blow up when he told them he was gay, but they still didn't accept that this was real. Troy felt like he had talked himself hoarse trying to make them understand.

It had been hard enough to get up the courage to tell them. He didn't expect to have to work so hard to make them believe him. Actually he thought that maybe they at least suspected the truth, his mother especially. She had a pointed way of asking about the girls he dated, like she thought there might be a problem.

But once he told them he was gay, both she and Dad were telling him he

needed to give girls more of a chance. "You just haven't met the one," his dad said and looked at his mom with a smile. Maybe she was his one, but Troy's one was a guy. He was absolutely sure of that now. Some day he might even meet that guy.

That was a real possibility now that he wasn't wasting his life on pretending to be someone he wasn't. There were tons of hot guys out there, and some of them were bound to be interested in him. Tonight was supposed to be a start of that, but it wasn't the way he expected – Spencer wasn't someone he had ever expected.

Tonight there was laughter and beer and kissing. It was starting – his real life, not some bad impression of being straight. He could still taste Spencer's kiss. He just hoped Spencer wouldn't regret it in the morning after he had a chance to sleep on it and the effect of the beer wore off. If Spencer didn't want complications where he lived, he might be kicking himself for that kiss. Troy hoped he didn't. He didn't want his first real kiss to be someone's regret.

Chapter 5

Spencer silenced the alarm that woke him and rolled out of bed, all with his eyes closed. If only he could go through the rest of the day that way. That's when he tripped over the shoes he kicked off last night and left lying in the middle of his bedroom. If he wanted to make it through the morning in one piece, he better force his eyes to open. Damn. He hated being awake.

And he wasn't sure how he felt about the flashes of the night before. Last night was a hazy, overlapping mess of tastes and sensations. Spencer could easily believe that none of it was real. Maybe Troy wasn't even real.

Groggily pulling open the door of his bedroom, he ran right into Troy. So he was real after all. But that kiss was bound to be a minefield.

"Sorry," Troy said though the run-in was clearly Spencer's fault.

"No problem," Spencer said and he even managed a kind of smile.

In return, Troy gave him his own version of a nervous smile and looked at him questioningly.

"So, good morning," Spencer told him, not knowing what else to say.

"It is? And last night, are we good?" Troy's brow was furrowed as he stared intently at Spencer.

Spencer wasn't sure what kind of answer he was looking for. "Why wouldn't we be?" he said a little defensively. It felt awkward to talk about it. What they said last night was enough. He didn't want to hear that he was only a test case to Troy, and that he shouldn't expect anything to happen between them. He already knew that perfectly well.

"I thought maybe you were worried that I was going to be a horndog all the time and bother you," Troy blurted out.

"So you're not?" Spencer said to tease him.

"Did I say that?" Troy asked.

"Not exactly," Spencer said and wondered what was going on. It was kind of like Troy was flirting with him. Wasn't he supposed to be letting him down easy?

"You look cute when you're sleepy," Troy told him.

Spencer stared at him and wondered if he was joking. That made more sense than flirting. He felt up his hair, and yes it was sticking up all tangled and weird.

"You're funny," he said to Troy while trying to flatten the knotted curls with his hand.

"No, I mean it. It's a sexy look," Troy said. Spencer knew it wasn't true, but he found it really hard to doubt him. He had such a beautiful, honest face.

Now Spencer was on his way to the shower and Troy was heading into the kitchen. Troy brushed against him as he passed, but Spencer knew that the hallway wasn't that narrow. He had navigated it plenty of times while practically still asleep. There was enough room even for a well-built guy like

Troy to pass him with no physical contact. Troy had done it on purpose and Spencer couldn't stop smiling at the thought. Troy brushed against him because he wanted to and maybe he wanted more than that. Maybe he wanted all of Spencer pressed up against him. As he got into the bathroom, Spencer wondered if he was delusional.

Through the door, he heard Greg reminding him again about not hogging the shower. It wasn't like Spencer could forget about Troy for even one second. Not while he was stripping for his shower, or getting wet under a stream of water or soaping himself up. It was like Troy was in there with him, mirroring everything he did from getting naked to lathering up his cock until he came.

To be considerate, Spencer shampooed his hair fast, scrubbed down, and rinsed off in record time. He ran the towel over himself roughly and worried a little that Troy would know exactly what he had been up to in there. He could probably guess that Spencer might jerk off in the shower. Hopefully he wouldn't guess that Spencer had been fantasizing about him. Hell, he had been fantasizing about him since before he met him.

Tying the towel around his waist, Spencer was out the door. That's when he ran into Troy again. Bumping into his big, muscular body several times a day might be a nice perk of having him as a roommate, but it did give his dick ideas Spencer had no hope of satisfying.

"It's free now," Spencer said unnecessarily, feeling like he had to say something while being pressed up against another guy.

Troy smiled at him and said, "Thanks." It was almost like he was thanking Spencer for running into him. "You didn't shave," Troy noticed and for a second his fingertips grazed the stubble on Spencer's jaw line and his chin.

Spencer shuddered at the fleeting touch. But that was nothing. Troy was just really friendly. There was no way he was interested in Spencer. The last time Spencer had time to check himself out in a mirror that wasn't completely fogged up, he wasn't impressed with what he saw. Could he have gotten better looking since then? No.

But something made Troy's gorgeous eyes twinkle in his direction as he went into the bathroom. Or he might just be laughing at Spencer, shaking his head at the awkward, skinny mess that slept next door to him and harbored illusions of being wanted. Good thing Spencer had no time to worry about that as he went to get ready while catching up on some texts at the same time.

As he came out of his bedroom, ready for work, Spencer heard Greg and Troy talking in the kitchen.

"Don't spoil him. He's already hopeless. If you start hand feeding him like a baby bird..." Greg said but Troy cut him off.

"I don't mind. So far Spencer is the only real friend I've made since I got here," Troy said as he pulled two slices of bread from the toaster.

"Isn't that putting all your eggs in one skinny basket?" Greg asked him.

"I guess, but we get along," Troy said and shot Spencer a smile when he saw him approach.

"What's this?" Spencer said as he returned Troy's smile and glared at Greg.

"A toast sandwich for you," Troy said as he finished making it, wrapped it in a napkin and handed it to Spencer. "You never have time to eat. You can eat this on the go. It's just peanut butter and jam."

"Thanks. Some day you'll make some lucky guy a gorgeous and considerate husband," Spencer said. Greg rolled his eyes, but Troy blushed. How cute was that. Too bad Spencer didn't have time to stay and enjoy the sight. He thanked Troy again and rushed out the door with his toast sandwich in hand.

Breadworks was jam-packed for lunch, but the crowd thinned out after that. That gave Spencer time to brag about his new, hot roommate to his work friend Wanda. If only he had a picture or two to show her and his other friends as they all demanded. That made some of them skeptical, but Spencer didn't care.

Since Troy had fed him breakfast, Spencer came home with a roast beef sandwich for Troy. He hurried up the stairs but at the same time readied himself for disappointment. Troy might not be there. Or he might not like roast beef.

Spencer tried not to jump for joy when he saw that Troy was home. He opted for a casual hello and showed him what he brought.

"Did you make this?" Troy said as Spencer handed him the sandwich.

"With my own two hands. You made me that mean toast sandwich this morning, so this is your reward. I took a wild guess. You looked like a roast beef kind of guy."

"I'm anything you put between two slices of bread kind of guy," Troy told him as he unwrapped the sandwich and offered half of it to Spencer.

Spencer shook his head. "It's all yours. They were trying out some new soups at work. I did a lot of taste testing."

"Thanks a lot," Troy told him. He bit into the sandwich and nodded with appreciation.

When he was done, he thanked Spencer again and tossed the paper in the trash. "I better go brush my teeth. You never know who I might be kissing," he said with a grin as he went to the bathroom.

Spencer couldn't believe he was teasing him like that. Of course that man was teasing him just by existing. He was big and manly but with that touch of innocence Spencer didn't even know would be so irresistible to him. And just to torture himself a little bit more, Spencer kept looking at him as he walked away.

As he got to the bathroom door, Troy used the top of the doorframe to stretch. He pulled his arms up and back and Spencer wanted to yell at him to stop flaunting himself so shamelessly. Not that he was doing it on purpose. It

wasn't Troy's fault that he was totally unselfconscious of his gorgeous physique and the dangerous effect it had on innocent bystanders. Spencer could stretch all he wanted, no one was going to notice or object that he was going to give them a hard-on.

When Troy came back, Spencer asked him if he had plans to go out. Troy tossed the question right back at him.

"My friend Donna works for a catering company. She got me a few hours carrying around trays of tiny food," Spencer told him.

Troy didn't look happy to hear that.

"You wanted to go out, right?" Spencer guessed. "You know, even if you go alone, I can promise you, you will not be alone for long. Pick a cute guy, smile at him, and it will be game over," Spencer predicted and tried not to show how he felt about the scenario of doom he just outlined.

Troy didn't say anything. He just looked hard at Spencer and smiled. It took him a minute to figure out what Troy was doing – exactly what he told him to do. Spencer ducked his head and blushed.

"If you blush like that, I don't know if I can keep my hands off you," Troy warned him.

"If you see anything you like, just help yourself," Spencer dared him knowing he was just bluffing.

For a long moment, Troy only stared him down. Still bluffing, Spencer was sure. Reaching out suddenly, he grabbed Spencer's arm to draw him close. Troy's warm breath touched him before his lips did.

When the kiss came, Spencer melted into it. He drowned in the wet heat of it, the delicious pressure and glide of their lips and tongues. He didn't mean to lose his head over a kiss, it just happened. It wasn't about skill. This was just Troy being himself and it was wonderful.

When he let him go, Troy sort of apologized. "Sorry. I needed more practice, and you did offer. I didn't want to go out there and embarrass myself."

"You have nothing to worry about," Spencer told him, a little breathless and flushed.

Going to get ready, Spencer stopped at his bedroom door. For a moment, he stayed with his back to Troy, hesitating. Maybe he could ask Troy if he wanted to hang out later. Or get out of there before he embarrassed himself. He got into his room hurriedly, but Troy came up right behind him and stuck his head through Spencer's bedroom door before he could close it.

"Thank you for the kiss," he said, his eyes bright as he gazed at Spencer longer than was decent.

Chapter 6

Troy thought that the big change in his life happened when he finally came out. Now he knew better. Moving into the same apartment with Spencer was a much bigger deal, a real eye opener.

Troy realized it again this morning when he had so much trouble picking out his clothes all of a sudden. He usually just threw on whatever was clean. But he kept picturing Spencer's dark, inquisitive eyes on him, and for him, Troy wanted to look his best.

Would he like this t-shirt, these jeans, these boxers? He should get new boxers. Since he was living with two guys, they might end up seeing him in his underwear.

Who was he kidding? He didn't care which underwear Greg saw him wearing. He wanted to show off his new underwear to Spencer. Then he wanted Spencer to pull them down with those long fingers, move those fingers up his thighs, slide his hands around to his ass and wrap his lips around his cock.

Fuck. Now Troy was hard, with his hand on his cock, jerking off. Screw getting dressed. He should just stay naked, his cock in his fist until Spencer came in to put him out of his misery.

If he didn't get Spencer to suck his cock, he would die. He would just die. As he gasped and came, making a mess of his old boxers and panting, Troy felt a little less like dying. But he would be obsessing about Spencer's mouth on his cock again any minute, so he better get dressed fast or he would never get to work.

That wasn't the only way he was obsessed with him. Now that he had a taste of kissing Spencer, not once, but twice, he wanted to kiss him all the time. That first time had been a revelation. He remembered the glint in Spencer's eyes. They were so dark but they still shone and drew him in. He was amazing.

He tried to picture what Spencer would look like when he was coming – beautiful, he would look damn beautiful. He might never get to see that. Kissing him didn't mean that Spencer wanted anything more. Why should he put up with Troy's inexperience?

Until he knew for sure, Troy wouldn't give up. He was having too much fun already. Running into Spencer all over the apartment was like a game. How close could he get? How often could he collide with him or brush up against him before Spencer figured out what he was up to?

He was smarter than Troy. He probably already knew. Troy was the one who was slow on the uptake. Look how long it took him to figure out he was gay.

Spencer was much braver too. Troy was physically stronger, but he didn't have that inner strength he saw in Spencer. Maybe if he stuck around him, it

would rub off on him.

OK, now he was thinking about Spencer rubbing up against him. He really had to do something about this thing he had for his roommate. He couldn't have two consecutive decent thoughts about him. It wasn't like Spencer was walking around naked all the time, but that would be awesome. And there goes his dirty mind again.

Troy usually got home before anyone else and looked forward to that first sight of Spencer as he came through the front door. Of course sometimes it was Greg who came in, and Troy had to hide his disappointment.

Today it was Spencer who came in first. He walked in fully clothed and not the way Troy had pictured him at all. He said hi and headed straight for the kitchen. Sitting on a barstool, trying to act casual while picturing him naked, Troy busied himself with his phone. He hoped his pointless swiping and clicking wasn't giving him away.

After rummaging around, Spencer grabbed a jar of peanut butter and a big spoon.

"Bonus. It's almost empty. That means I can eat straight from the jar and not get murdered by Greg," Spencer said before he dug in.

Troy didn't mean to watch him so closely as he ate, but he just couldn't tear his eyes away. His dick swelled dangerously every time Spencer licked the spoon. Troy never knew eating peanut butter from a jar was so obscene. He wondered if Spencer would do something indecent with any other food. He should definitely offer him a banana or his cock. Damn, damn, damn.

While Troy wanted to lick Spencer all over, he also wanted to know if this was his dinner.

"Why not?" Spencer said while scraping out what was left in the jar.

"You can't live on peanut butter," Troy pointed out.

"I eat fruit."

"Let's have some real food," Troy told him and took the pretty much empty jar away from him.

While Troy threw dinner together, Spencer told him that Greg bought food for both of them. "When I was in charge of my own food shopping, I hardly ever bothered. Greg was afraid I would starve so he now buys groceries for me too."

"And he accused me of feeding you like a baby bird," Troy said.

"He charges me extra for that. He knows I can't pay rent if I starve to death," Spencer said, not giving Greg credit for actually caring about him though he obviously did. Troy was just glad Greg had a boyfriend.

Sitting on the couch with two improvised dinners balanced on their knees, Spencer and Troy were negotiating what to watch.

"Since you did most of the work to feed us, it's your choice. Pick anything from the *Stargate* franchise," Spencer said. "I'm willing to watch the movie

again even though I've seen it a million times."

"That's generous of you," Troy told him. "I kind of vaguely remember a movie. I think you better pick since you're the expert."

"You mean the nerd?" Spencer said as he started playing something. "*Atlantis* it is. It gets my highest score for actor hotness and gay subtext."

"Sounds good," Troy had to admit.

With their dirty plates abandoned on the coffee table to get dry and crusty, the two of them sprawled on the couch, lazy and full as they plowed through some episodes. Once they had enough of that, Spencer turned the TV off. He pulled his feet up on one end of the couch, wrapped his arms around his knees and stared at Troy.

"From what you told me before, you left a lot of girls mad and frustrated," Spencer said to start him talking.

"I wouldn't say a lot," Troy said. That was a time in his life he wanted to put behind him, but he didn't mind telling Spencer a few things. "The last time was over spring break. I was making some excuse for why I didn't want to go up to this girl's apartment. I was telling her how the walls were too thin, everyone could hear us. And she was like, 'Hear what? There's nothing to hear.' That's when it hit me – I didn't want to fuck her. I would never want to fuck her, just like I never wanted to fuck any girl, but eventually gave in anyway. The next day I took her to lunch and broke up with her. I think I was breaking up with the whole female sex. She wasn't even surprised. She just shook her head and walked out." He turned to Spencer with a smile. "You were years ahead of me." Troy was in awe of him.

"I put two and two together pretty early. I saw how other guys looked at girls. Ogled their boobs and asses. Meanwhile I'm looking at the guys' asses and trying to see the outline of their cocks. Case closed."

"I wish I had been that smart. I figured when I look at a girl and think she's cute, that means I'm straight. I feel all hot and uncomfortable around guys, my palms get sweaty, but that doesn't mean anything. I like being with girls. It's nice, not uncomfortable at all. So that means I'm meant to be with girls. The whole time, all I had to do was look at my straight friends. They got nervous, sweaty and stupid as fuck around girls, but they were all 'whatever' around other guys. How dumb am I?"

"Are you hot and uncomfortable now?" Spencer asked him pointedly while giving him a teasing look.

"And if I am, what are you gonna do about it?" Troy challenged him.

He was waiting for Spencer to form an answer when Greg came home and eyed them suspiciously. Both of them put on a "nothing to see here" attitude. Greg shook his head like he didn't buy their act. But there was nothing going on. They had only been talking.

Greg announced he had a date with his boyfriend. He got ready and was gone in no time. As soon as Greg was on the other side of the front door, Troy

turned to Spencer.

"Where were we?"

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"You were trying to pull something," Spencer reminded Troy archly and picked up the plates to take them into the kitchen. He wasn't expecting Greg to clear out so fast and leave him alone with Troy. It made him nervous. That's why he was keeping himself busy by loading dishes into the dishwasher.

"Me?" Troy said trying to act innocent, but then he decided to fess up. "You gave me my first kiss and my second kiss. You could get me started on some other stuff too." He gave Spencer a sheepish but hopeful look.

"I'm not your training wheels," Spencer said kind of sharply.

Troy immediately sobered. "Sorry. I didn't mean it like that."

Spencer wiped his hands and avoided meeting his eyes. Damn, did he just refuse a come on from Troy. "I'm not completely against it," Spencer was quick to say. "What did you have in mind?"

"I've never done anything. Whatever you want to do is fine by me. I've been watching a lot of gay porn lately," Troy added.

That was a little worrying. "Nothing weird, right? I'm strictly vanilla."

"I love vanilla," Troy said with a grin.

"I still can't believe you missed out on all the stealthy, high school groping and mutual stroking. I don't know how you did it," Spencer said. He would expect guys to line up for a chance at him.

"If I met you in those days, you would have broken me down like nothing," Troy claimed.

Spencer shook his head, not believing him. He didn't have any special power over Troy. Spencer was just someone who happened to be willing and conveniently located. "I don't know about that, but I'm open to helping you out now," Spencer offered. As he went back to the living room, he took a deep breath and suppressed a shudder of fear and excitement.

A happy smile spread across Troy's face at his words. "Sounds like we have a deal." He jumped up off the couch and offered his hand for a handshake.

Spencer looked down at his hand but didn't take it. "You don't shake hands on this kind of deal," he said. He grabbed Troy by the wrist and pulled him in for a kiss.

"Oh, that's better," Troy gasped, a little out of breath when Spencer let him go. "Way better than a handshake. What should we do now?" Troy asked, looking eager.

"First we'll do some basic fooling around," Spencer said as he led the way to his bedroom. It was like he was outlining a lesson plan, but he didn't know what the hell he was doing. When it came to sex ed, Spencer didn't exactly feel like an expert. But compared to Troy, he was, so that would have to be

good enough.

It wasn't like he could talk himself out of it anyway. In most ways, this was a dream come true. He was closing the door of his bedroom, and he was going to get his hands on Troy. It didn't seem real.

"Anything you want to do is good," Troy said in a husky whisper and grabbed Spencer around the waist. Impatient to start, he kissed Spencer deep and hard, pressing him into the door and grinding into him. Once he had Spencer moaning, he let go.

As they both panted, Troy warned him. "This will only work if we keep it casual. I'm not..."

"Agreed," Spencer said quickly, not caring about warnings or conditions as long as he got to have Troy.

Chapter 7

They kissed some more as Spencer dragged him to his bed. He still didn't know what he was going to do with him, but he was determined to do something.

Soon they were kneeling on the bed, facing each other, Troy's sweatpants tenting – a lot. As Troy cursed his raging hard-on, Spencer tried not to stare.

"I guess I'm a little..."

"You're a not a little anything," Spencer said and he blushed.

Troy leaned forward and stared into his eyes intently. "Do you remember me telling you that you aren't safe when you blush?"

"I mostly remember you using me for kissing practice," Spencer pretended to complain.

"And I'll do it again," Troy threatened.

Spencer smiled at him, but he was really at a loss for words. Was this really happening? And if it was, why was Spencer too tongue-tied to tell the man to get naked already.

"OK. Let's see how I can help you out," Spencer finally managed to say, but it was more like he was helping himself. He wanted that hard cock in his mouth. He was dying for it and acting like he was doing Troy a favor.

Feeling drunk with need, Spencer reached out and lightly cupped Troy's cock over his sweatpants. Troy gasped and Spencer pulled his hand back.

They were both breathing hard now. Spencer's eyes traveled from the startled look in Troy's eyes down his body to the impressive and a little frightening bulge in his sweatpants.

Somehow he still managed to grab the edge of Troy's t-shirt and pulled it up. Once it was over his head, Spencer tossed it aside. He lightly ran his hands down Troy's chest to the ripples of his abs. Amazing. Taking hold of the waistband of his sweatpants, Spencer eased them down over his erection while Troy raised his hips to help him out. His boxers were next.

Troy kicked away the sweatpants and boxers while Spencer lost it at the sight of him. His look meandered drunkenly over Troy's chest, so broad and strong, down his firm abs to his crotch where Spencer wanted to bury his face and never come up for air.

Somehow his gaze left his mesmerizing cock and locked on Troy's brown eyes. Those were the best eyes, always looking at Spencer like they were happy to see him.

As Spencer sat there intoxicated, Troy didn't wait patiently. He pulled Spencer into a hard kiss, making him reel and float while his lower body was grinding into him obscenely.

Spencer was fully clothed and still feeling every inch of Troy's cock press against him. Troy's tongue thrust into his mouth. He stole Spencer's breath until he pushed him away.

"Be good. Lie down so I can have my fun," Spencer told him.

He put his hands on Troy's beautifully muscled chest and pushed until he had him flat on his back. Spencer didn't wait one second before he leaned down, placed his mouth on one nipple, while pinching the other between his fingers. Troy rose into his licks and bites and had to be pressed back down. His nipples got hard, standing up, tortured by Spencer's tongue and teeth.

Troy called his name over and over again, driving him out of his mind. He pulled Spencer up to kiss his mouth. Spencer had to break free of that kiss so he could move down. With his name ringing in his ears, Spencer kissed a path over Troy's throat and his collarbone, from his shoulder to his chest and abs. He was finding his way blindly with licks and kisses and sometimes a bite.

Shifting down to the space between his naked thighs, Spencer groaned in anticipation. His hand skimmed Troy's sides and stopped to rest near his crotch. Spencer raised his eyes to meet Troy's. Now it was real and Spencer was fully conscious of what he was about to do.

He felt his long fingers curl around Troy's cock. A shudder passed from Troy's body to his and back. Spencer hovered above him then dipped lower so his face was over Troy's erection. He let his breath tease it as he spoke.

"Thanks for picking me to be your first," Spencer said then licked the precum off the tip. He savored the taste as well as Troy's deep moan. Telling Troy, "You taste amazing," he nuzzled his balls. He took the head of his cock in his mouth then swirled his tongue around it. Letting his lips and tongue play over every vein, Spencer felt like he could worship Troy's cock forever.

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This had only been a fantasy.

As Spencer's hot, wet mouth wrapped around his cock, tongue swirling, Troy was lost. He didn't know anything could feel this good. The next hot swipe of Spencer's tongue sliding up and down his shaft made Troy grunt and shudder hard.

He couldn't take it. His hips started to thrust, but he made himself hold still. By sheer force of will, he anchored himself to the bed and tried not to move. His whole body tensed, desperate for more. His nerves thrummed with every movement of Spencer's mouth.

His mouth was sliding over his cock, his hand pumping in rhythm over the rest. Troy tried to stay motionless, but he couldn't help thrusting just a little in time with Spencer's sucking. Spencer had a firm hold on him but he allowed it, no, he liked it. Troy could tell because he sent a moan over his cock and right into him. The sweet vibration amplified his pleasure and made him tremble and groan.

Troy couldn't take another second of it. He needed to pump. He needed to fuck. Troy knew he shouldn't but he was helpless to it and thrust deeper into Spencer's mouth as he came. Everything went white as pleasure shot through him like lightning. Looking down his body, his chest heaving, he watched

Spencer swallow and open his own fly.

Troy reached for him. His fist closed over Spencer's as they both took hold of his cock. His lips, still swollen and wet from sucking him off, landed on Troy's for a deep, thorough kiss. Working together, they had Spencer coming in no time. Troy held him closer and kissed him harder as he came. He felt Spencer's moans travel through him and tasted his own come.

Shoulder to shoulder, they were sitting against the headboard. One of Spencer's legs was swung over one of Troy's and their heads leaned together. Troy was naked and Spencer was still dressed. That was kind of weird.

As he was thinking about maybe getting him naked, Troy felt Spencer shift and relax with his head on his chest. Troy wondered if he could stay the night. He would feel stupid asking and admitting how much he liked just holding Spencer. That crap wasn't part of the plan. But maybe if he just didn't move, they could stay like this for a while.

Then Spencer's phone chimed with a new text and he reached for it. He moved a little away from Troy as he read it and answered it. Some more texts and replies went back and forth, and Troy wondered if this might be Spencer's way of sending a message, reminding him where things stood between them. Obviously Troy needed the reminder.

He got up and started to get dressed. It was weird that he got to experience something so incredible and then had to pretend it meant nothing. That was something he needed to learn too – the highs followed by the lows, like Christmas day after all the presents were opened and all that was left were bits of torn wrapping paper. Still, Spencer had given him the best gift.

*

Spencer hated to feel Troy leave the bed, his weight shifting then gone as he stood up. He wasn't supposed to stay though. Spencer had no right to feel disappointed.

Not wanting to give himself away, Spencer was going to pretend to be into the stupid, drunk texts Donna was sending him. His eyes wouldn't obey and stay on the screen. Spencer turned to admire Troy as he bent down to pick up his clothes and put them on. The view of him as he walked away wasn't all bad either. Sweatpants on that ass, what could be better, other than Spencer's hands on that ass.

"So that's what I've been missing," Troy said and looked at Spencer over his shoulder before he was gone.

Spencer watched him disappeared from sight as the door closed after him. Sitting up higher against the headboard, he watched the now closed door. More texts came from Donna. She was having a really good time, but this time Spencer ignored them.

Later that night, Spencer was sleepless. Nothing was worse that not being able to enjoy a good night's sleep. That maddening sliver of light under his door was like someone shining a flashlight in his face. This was a punishment for being a fool and letting someone like Troy get to him.

He slept on and off, but dreams of Troy kept him restless until his eyes were stabbed by sunlight. Spencer squinted threateningly at the morning light that dared to enter his room. Stupid sun.

As he was considering dragging himself out of bed, another punishment came his way. Greg came into Spencer's bedroom. Holding a mug of coffee, and handing another one to Spencer, he sat at the foot of his bed.

"How filthy is this bed right now?" he asked as he checked the space where he had planted his ass. How the hell did he know he and Troy hooked up?

"So so," Spencer told him as he sat up so he could drink the cup of death Greg had brought him.

"I saw that you two were getting ready to jump each other as soon as I turned my back," Greg said accusingly.

Spencer tried to act as casual as he could. "It was no big deal, just a hook-up."

"Since when are you a hook-up guy?"

"Since forever. You don't know me as well as you think you do," Spencer claimed.

Greg didn't buy it for a minute. "So you're not the hapless guy I know? You're all cool-headed about sex and sophisticated all of a sudden?"

"People grow. Troy and I have an arrangement," Spencer said decisively. He wasn't sure if it was an ongoing thing or if last night was it, but he didn't want Greg to think he was falling for Troy. He wasn't that stupid.

"Arrangement my ass. You look at him like your going to devour him," Greg said.

"In case you haven't noticed, he's hot. How am I supposed to look at him?"

"With less heart and more dick," Greg said.

"Huh?"

Greg dismissed his show of confusion. "Don't pretend you don't know what I mean."

"Whatever," Spencer said and got out of bed. He set down his coffee cup and went to get ready just so he wouldn't have to listen to Greg.

On his way to the bathroom, he stopped near Troy's bedroom door and saw it was left ajar. Troy wasn't in there.

"He went for a run," Greg told him, coming up behind Spencer and startling him.

Greg went to the kitchen, but Spencer lingered. The things Troy had been wearing to bed were thrown over his pillow. Spencer was dying to climb in there, sniff his pillow and his clothes. But that would be so wrong.

Greg was right. Troy was too much for him to handle. Spencer wasn't equipped for this. He wanted this thing with Troy to be no big deal, but he felt like he was already getting pulled down into unknown depths.

At work, Spencer was making up a big order that some guy was picking up for his office. While he waited, the office guy was talking on the phone, telling someone how he needed to ditch some girl who was getting clingy.

"She's like, 'You want to grab something to eat?' If I wanted to date her, I would be the one asking. And when she gives head, she stops every two minutes to ask if I'm close. Jesus."

That kind of bitching was just what Spencer liked to listen to. It was a rude reminder to him not to get clingy. Troy wasn't anything like this guy, but he also wasn't looking to get serious just because Spencer did him the favor of blowing him.

After the guy left, Wanda sidled up to Spencer. "I hear gay guys give the best head. Someone should tell that guy to switch teams."

"We don't want him," Spencer told her. "And that guy doesn't deserve good head anyway."

"You're so shallow," she accused him.

"That wasn't about his looks," Spencer told her though the guy was lucky any girl was into him. "He was a jerk."

"You didn't want my geeky cousin after I showed you a picture of him," she reminded him. "You said it was like looking in the mirror."

"Since when is that an insult?" It wasn't a compliment either though. That's what Spencer should remember. Instead, he was estimating how much time he could spend with Troy before he ditched him for getting clingy. Being with Troy just felt so good even if they only sat around watching TV or talking. If Troy was a jerk, Spencer's life would be so much simpler.

Chapter 8

When he came home, Spencer didn't see the usual pile of junk mail Greg liked to dump on the kitchen counter. No one else was there so he went out to check the mailbox on the first floor. Halfway down, he heard footsteps on the stairs. It wasn't the quick snap of Greg's feet. The footsteps were too slow and dragging to be Troy, but that's who Spencer saw coming up toward him.

Flashbacks from last night played in front of his eyes as Spencer stood there, rooted to the spot. He told himself to get out of the way so the man could pass him on the narrow stairway, but Troy stopped a few steps below him and smiled up at him.

"It's nice to see you, really nice," Troy told him, his voice a familiar sound that still made Spencer feel warm and shivery inside.

Spencer shrugged and tried to keep that warm feeling from turning hot. But it was too late. The feeling was heating up his body and spreading all through him. He was helpless against the way Troy's eyes had brightened as soon as he saw him and the way his voice washed over him.

"Did you have a rough day at work?" Spencer asked since Troy looked so relieved to see a friendly face.

"A little bit. Our boss had a bad day, so everybody had a bad day. Want to make me feel better?" Troy asked wickedly.

"First I'm going to go get the mail. Then I'll think about what I can do for you," Spencer told him. He started to walk down again. As usual, Troy didn't move out of his way. "You like crowding me, don't you?"

"I do," Troy admitted with a big smile.

"Looking like you do, you can get away with anything," Spencer told him as he squeezed past him. It was more than his looks though. There was something so open and warm about Troy. And once Spencer was done playing hard to get, he would be all over him and explore his appeal fully.

Spencer went back up with the junk mail in hand and his heart beating too fast. He only had time to drop the mail on the kitchen counter before Troy was on him.

"You're in a hurry," Spencer said, his voice shaky as Troy nuzzled his neck.

"Greg won't be gone forever and we might want to make some noise," Troy said and nibbled on his ear.

Spencer suppressed a whimper that got lost in Troy's kiss. A little light groping and kissing as they made their way to Spencer's bedroom made him burn for Troy even more. By the time they got inside, Spencer was ripping his fly open and Troy's cock was in his hand.

Pushing Troy to sit on the bed, Spencer kneeled in front of him. He ran his hands over Troy's powerful thighs and wished he could explore his body thoroughly. But Troy's hands were in his hair, his breathing fast and loud. Troy was too ready, desperate to come. Spencer didn't want to make him wait.

His cock thick and hard in his grip, Spencer licked a path down to his balls. Spencer hoped he would get another chance to lick him all over. For now he enjoyed Troy's enthusiastic response as he sucked him hard, giving him what he needed.

Troy's hoarse moans were pure pleasure to him. Every sound he made urged him on. His hands mussed Spencer's hair, tugging at it, pulling him back and forth over his cock a little. Troy cursed and came and then dropped back on the bed.

"Oh, God. You're so good," he gasped. "Sorry I came so fast."

"It was quick but good," Spencer told him as he stood up, but then he realized he should warn him. "I don't know about the girls you dated, but keep in mind, not everyone likes being pulled by the hair."

"Fuck. I'm sorry," Troy said, looking stricken. "I didn't even realize I was doing that."

"It's fine. I mean, I don't mind," Spencer stammered as he sat down on the bed. In fact he was still unbearably hard from every second of sucking Troy's cock and everything that went along with it.

"I want to do you now," Troy said and pulled Spencer down on the bed next to him. He ran his hand up Spencer's leg until he was cupping his erection.

"A handjob is fine." Spencer wasn't sure Troy really wanted to.

Leaning on his arms and looming above him, Troy gave him an intense look. "No. I want to ... I need to... I have to have you." His eyes roved Spencer's body with an open look of desire. Spencer found it hard to believe that it was for him.

"OK," Spencer said uncertainly.

"I've been dying to do this," Troy said.

Spencer liked this side of Troy too much to resist him or his own need. He firmly reminded himself that Troy was dying to suck cock, not to suck his cock. The way Troy grabbed him and kissed him before he started to undo his belt drove all thoughts out of his head.

It was really easy to forget what this was about. Everything Troy did felt so good. Spencer just wanted to forget everything but the feeling building inside him as Troy looked down at him with lust and started to undo the buttons of his fly.

With Spencer's jeans unbuttoned and Troy holding his fly open, he stopped. "Can I...?" Troy asked in a low, husky voice. Then he took a breath. "I want to strip you all the way. That OK?"

"Sure," Spencer said. He couldn't say no to him now.

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Troy started out being nervous, but soon got overwhelmed by other, much stronger feelings. While he unbuttoned Spencer's shirt, he lifted Troy's t-shirt and fondled his pecs.

"Arms up," Spencer told him. Troy raised his arms so Spencer could slide the t-shirt up and off him. He had already discovered that it felt amazing to be undressed by another guy. It made him hard all over again. Plus he liked how Spencer was looking at him. His eyes were hooded, his lips parted.

Those lips just had to be kissed. Troy leaned in slowly, feeling his hands become shaky as he tried to work the last button of Spencer's shirt at the same time. Spencer tilted his head and their lips met. Troy felt like he was falling as Spencer's mouth moved over his and his tongue slid inside. Troy tasted him for only a moment before Spencer pulled back, his tongue licking his lower lip.

Troy dragged Spencer's jeans and boxers together down his legs and never took his eyes off his erection. He wanted it so bad.

"You too," Spencer said and Troy's jeans came off as well.

Troy didn't know where their clothes landed and he didn't care. He had spent too much time picturing Spencer naked not to go a little crazy at the sight of the real thing. His heart was beating hard, pounding in his ears so loud he almost couldn't hear his own heavy breathing.

Spencer was too beautiful for words and with his cock jutting out hard and ready for Troy to suck, he was the most beautiful thing Troy had ever seen – long limbs, slim body, an irresistible cock. This was it. He could touch Spencer as much as he wanted, every inch, but first Troy had to kiss him some more.

His hands were uncoordinated, trying to grope Spencer everywhere. Troy was embarrassed at how overcome he was, but mainly he wanted Spencer so much he didn't care if he made a fool of himself just as long as he got to make him come.

Troy pressed his nose into the dark hair that led from his navel to his dick. It was all new to him and he couldn't slow down to savor it. He just had to have Spencer right now. He took him in deep, too deep.

Troy sucked him with no mercy. Spencer bucked under him, thrashed under the incredible suction. Then he came with a cry, and Troy swallowed pure happiness. He was on fire and came as soon as he reached down to touch his cock.

Troy didn't know how much time passed, just breathing and sometimes kissing Spencer.

"Why did you rush?" Spencer asked him, still breathless, his voice quiet right in Troy's ear.

"I didn't mean to. I couldn't help it. I finally had you where I wanted you."

"Next time, slow down. Let a man enjoy some head," Spencer told him.

"I think I love sucking cock. Maybe even too much," Troy said while wearing a blissful smile.

"That means that you might be gay."

"I'll have to investigate some more. To make sure," Troy said and rolled on

top of Spencer to kiss him, feel him and taste him all over again.

This felt so right. How did he deny it to himself all this time?

Troy was only now getting to know himself, what he liked, how it felt to be with a man. He was really happy to have Spencer teaching him. He was just the guy to show him how good it felt when it was right.

Troy had felt the pressure of Spencer's cock at his throat and he liked it. Next time he would take him deeper. Of course next time it might be someone else. But right now, his mind could only picture Spencer and only feel Spencer filling his mouth with his hard cock and the taste of his come.

Afterward Troy was almost asleep, but he needed a trip to the bathroom. He left Spencer's bed unwillingly and pulled on his jeans. Later, going back to Spencer's room, he wasn't happy to see that he was gone and he couldn't climb back into bed with him. Then he saw that Spencer was up, dressed and foraging for something to eat in the kitchen.

Troy put on his t-shirt and went to join him. Not trusting Spencer when it came to food, Troy took over and made some spaghetti for them. They watched TV and Spencer gave a lecture on zombies.

"You could teach a class," Troy told him. "Too bad you can't major in that."

"Yes," Spencer agreed readily.

After a few hours of *Z Nation*, they were ready for bed. Troy was pretty sure that he wasn't supposed to go back to Spencer's room. He went anyway and hung out in the doorway. If Spencer didn't want him there, he would have to throw him out.

Looking into the dark room, Troy watched as Spencer straightened the sheets they had messed up earlier. Then he took the time to hug his pillow tightly.

"Do you love your pillow more than you could ever love any human being?" Troy asked him.

Startled, Spencer jumped and turned to Troy. "Let me sleep on you and let's find out," he said brazenly as he tried to bluff his way through his embarrassment.

Taking the challenge, Troy dropped on his bed and made himself comfortable. Spencer climbed into bed too. Wrapping his arms around Troy, he rested his head on his chest.

"Not bad," he said and Troy could feel him smile.

In the middle of the night, Spencer pulled free of him and got up. Half asleep, Troy forgot whose bed they were in. He was afraid Spencer might be gone for good. It turned out he was only going to the bathroom. He did it with his eyes closed, feeling his way there and back. Spencer crawled over the bed and groped his way to him blindly, refusing to admit that going to the bathroom and back required him to be awake. Troy laughed at him but he was

very glad to have him return to his arms.

What could be better than waking up all tangled up with Spencer? Wait. No. He was supposed to wake up with other men. Lots of other men. Maybe all together. That was an interesting idea.

Smiling into Spencer's hair, Troy snuggled closer to him. Why did he have to feel so good? He made him forget that there were lots of other guys waiting out there for him. It was hard to remember all those other men when Spencer was warm in his arms and breathing softly against his chest.

Chapter 9

Fuck. Why was he being woken up so early? Oh, that's why, Spencer realized as he felt a hard cock press into his thigh. A warm breath tickled his ear as Troy's sleepy, husky voice mumbled, "Spencer, please."

Oh, yeah, that was worth waking up for. Troy nuzzled him and groped him, giving Spencer flashbacks of being woken up and stripped naked in the middle of the night while he was half asleep. Both of them were naked now since Spencer had returned the favor, cursed Troy for waking him but loved every minute of what he did to him after that. He was anticipating more of the same this morning.

As he came fully awake, Spencer noticed the play of sunbeams on his wall. "What time is it?" Squinting at the time on his alarm clock, Spencer groaned and pushed Troy away.

"Damn," Troy said and rolled off him.

With a deep sigh, he stretched, and Spencer watched his big muscles elongate. How did he even manage to fit on this bed? As Spencer's eyes roamed his body, Troy smiled at him seductively. He was so tempting, especially his jutting cock, but they didn't have time for anything before Spencer had to get ready for work.

When Spencer crawled over him to get out of bed, Troy saw his chance. He tried to catch him and pull him back, but Spencer was too quick for him. Troy groaned in disappointment and eyed Spencer lewdly as he walked around the room bare-assed, gathering what he needed so he could get ready. Spencer felt the burning intensity of that look on his naked skin. Fuck, he was weak.

"Shower," Spencer said suddenly. He turned to Troy, still stretched out on the bed, naked, hard and gorgeous. "You want to try showering with a guy?"

"Now I'm having flashbacks to the locker room after practice," Troy said as he got up.

Spencer threw him his jeans on so he could be decent walking across the hall. "Practice?"

"I was on the baseball team for a year. Wasn't very good," Troy said with a shrug as he pulled his jeans on.

"You can go ahead and paint me a picture of that locker room, leave nothing out, especially any jock orgies."

"I didn't even have jock orgy fantasies, much less actual orgies," Troy said.

Spencer stared at him. He couldn't believe it. "Seriously? How is that possible?"

"Repressed them, I guess. If I let myself fantasize about guys, it would have been the kind of clue even I couldn't miss," Troy said with a shrug.

"Didn't your dick have anything to say about this?"

"Sometimes, but I always found ways to explain away any stray hard-ons. If I was looking at a guy and sprang a boner, I told myself I was probably thinking about the guy's sister or something."

"I want to admire your powers of self-delusion, but mostly I just feel sorry for you. Your baseball career was a prime missed opportunity, you know?"

"Sympathies accepted. What about those indecent shower activities now that I've come to my senses?" Troy said and made a grab for Spencer that he evaded.

"Instead of a jock orgy, you'll have to settle for one single, solitary nerd," Spencer told him.

"You're a nerd with an amazing ass," Troy told him. "And the rest of you is cute too."

Spencer swallowed and tried to act like compliments from Troy had no effect on him. Grabbing hold of Troy's hand, he dragged him off to the bathroom.

Once in there, it didn't take them long to get out of what little they were wearing. They got in the shower, and Spencer couldn't take his eyes off Troy or keep his hands off him. Were shower fantasies supposed to come true?

He grabbed the soap and started scrubbing Troy. Water flowed over his amazing body, washing away the soap and revealing glistening skin over hard muscle. He looked as good wet as Spencer had imagined, and he felt even better.

Spencer's hands were everywhere until they were on his cock. As soon as his cock was in Spencer's grasp, Troy grunted and started thrusting. He was cursing and calling Spencer's name.

While water ran down his body and his hips were pumping, Troy was an intoxicating sight. Then he was coming, his head dropping on Spencer's shoulder as his come hit the tiles.

With water flowing over them, Troy kissed him. Spencer moaned into the kiss and reached for his own cock. Groping down his body, Troy swatted his hand away and confiscated the soap from him. He wore a wicked smile as he lathered up his hands.

"I wonder what you're planning," Spencer said, hard and waiting for whatever Troy had in mind for him. He was letting water run over his face while staying within easy reach of Troy's soapy hands.

Troy turned him around and Spencer gasped as his hands made contact. Starting with his neck, Troy ran his strong hands down his back. Once he reached his ass, he kneaded it while Spencer breathed hard. Troy's hands moved around to his chest.

Now Troy was so close behind him, right up against him where Spencer could feel his erection come back to life against the crack of his ass. Troy teased and pinched his nipples and nibbled on his earlobe. One of his hands traveled down and took hold of Spencer's cock.

The grip of his hand was so strong. Moaning, Spencer wobbled and fell back against Troy's chest. Troy's arm wrapped around his front, holding him in place as he jerked him off with firm, commanding strokes.

Coming fast and hard, Spencer turned to face Troy and watched as he licked

his hand.

"I never enjoyed a shower more," Troy said. He was hard, and Spencer couldn't leave him like that. Risking his job if he was late, Spencer kneeled down and sucked him off.

When Spencer finally turned off the water that had gone completely cold, both of them stood there dripping wet and panting. Feeling satisfied, they blinked with wet eyelashes and grinned at each other. Spencer's longish hair was plastered over his face and Troy pushed it off his forehead.

Pulling a towel off the rack, Spencer dried him off with rough, impatient hands. Done with that, he snapped the towel in his direction and Troy dodged and laughed. Troy returned the favor and dried him as well.

Spencer really had to rush now, but they didn't go unnoticed coming out of the bathroom together.

"Really?" Greg yelled at them. Standing in the kitchen, he scowled over his coffee cup.

"We are economizing," Spencer said to Greg who rolled his eyes.

It was weird though. He and Troy were now sleeping together and showering together. If Spencer didn't have to rush off, they might have had breakfast together too. Greg was right to give him that scathing look. Spencer needed to take a big step back, but he wasn't sure he could.

That night Spencer went to Marlene's for dinner and to watch some creepy, foreign movie that would probably give him nightmares. At least there would be pizza. In the meantime he would try not to wonder what Troy was up to while he was gone.

It was good that Spencer was doing this. Spending too much time with Troy would be a bad idea. They had overdone it already. Being with him like that messed with Spencer's head.

He wished he was better at hiding it though. Marlene noticed right away. They only just sat down on her couch when she started questioning him.

"You look weird. What are you up to?" she asked with narrowed eyes trained on him.

"Just a casual thing with my roommate," Spencer said.

"Aha. Your new, hot roomie. Aha. Just a casual thing. Right," she clearly didn't believe him. She pushed back a strand of her dark red, perfectly straight hair.

"And how do you know it's not?" Spencer said and fidgeted on the couch.

"Because you didn't brag about bagging a hot guy. You're obviously too busy mooning and sighing over him to brag."

"You're crazy. I'm not mooning," Spencer said rejecting that horrifying image of himself.

"Lying, lovesick liar," she called him.

"I'm not lovesick. I know where I stand with Troy. He's not interested. I mean, he's interested but only in sex," Spencer said to defend and explain himself, but Marlene had her own take on it.

"And you are determined to complicate this sweet, sex only thing you have going on."

"I am not. I'm keeping a cool head. Troy needs to explore and be free and all that. He isn't ready to get serious. At the same time, I'm getting to live out some fantasies. We're useful to each other. That's all," Spencer told her as she got up and went to her fridge.

"I'm impressed," she said as she got him a hard cider and one for herself. "I didn't realize you could be so practical and levelheaded. But if you ever need a reminder, you come back over here and I'll slap some sense into you." She plopped down next to him and took a sip from the bottle.

"No thank you. When is that pizza getting here?" Spencer said. He went to the window and saw no sign of any pizza delivery vehicle.

"I forgot to order it," Marlene said and put her feet up on her laptop sitting closed on her coffee table.

"So never? Awesome."

Spencer did get fed eventually and then came back home to an empty apartment. He didn't know if he was disappointed or relieved, but without a doubt, the quiet made him feel sad. He didn't want to reach for any electronic devices to make him feel less lonely. He opened the window so the sounds from the outside could come in.

Wind rustled the leaves on the trees in front of the building. Their top branches were right at his eye level. The streetlights winked on and off as they were filtered between the leaves.

Spencer heard a night bird singing and he smiled at the sound. Even a muddled idiot can listen to birds singing and smile. This late, the street wasn't too busy so the sounds of traffic would come and go. He sometimes heard a voice or a laugh. Maybe those were people he knew coming and going from Bottleneck.

He wondered if Troy was there or at some other bar. Maybe he was hooking up with someone. He might even be going home with some guy, fucking him and then spending the night.

Standing at the open window, Spencer told himself that he was OK with that. He and Troy were just friends. But when he caught sight of his own grim expression in the window glass and noticed how tightly he gripped the windowsill, he wasn't so sure.

He should go out and pick up some guy the way Troy was probably doing right now. The idea had no appeal to Spencer. Being with anyone but Troy would just make him feel worse. He knew he wouldn't have Troy all to himself for long, but he didn't get ready for how it would hit him. Now he was all alone, pitiful and moping by an open window.

Birds were hiding somewhere in the branches outside, making a racket, chirping away cheerfully like nothing was wrong in this world. Stupid birds. Meanwhile Troy was probably out there somewhere scoring with a hotter guy than him. It was inevitable. Spencer was just his training wheels, and training wheels were meant to come off.

Chapter 10

Since it was so hot these days, Troy either went running in the early morning or waited till the evening. He waited until the evening today and ran in the shadows of the buildings. It only seemed cool at first though. He was soon sweating. At the end of his run, sprinting up and down the apartment building stairs had him huffing. When his legs really started to hurt, he decided he was done.

Wiping sweat off his face with his sleeve, Troy went into the apartment and found Spencer in the kitchen. He was eating pretzels and seemed surprised to see him.

"Your well balanced diet as usual."

"I thought you went out again," Spencer said.

Troy had gone out by himself these last few nights. He did manage to talk and flirt with a few guys, but he always backed off before he got in too deep.

"No luck," he admitted to Spencer though it was kind of embarrassing how bad he was at this and how fast he chickened out. "I only get lucky with you." Why did he find his roommate irresistible and run from every other guy? Maybe the answer was in those dark eyes that refused to look at him right now.

"That's because I'm easy," Spencer said. He seemed more distant than usual.

Troy was going to ask him about it but Spencer got busy on his phone. Grabbing a bottle of water from the fridge, Troy hung around and waited for him to finish. In the cooler air of the apartment, his sweat soaked t-shirt and shorts were getting uncomfortable.

While Spencer sat perched on the arm of the sofa, texting, Troy went into his room but left the door open. He peeled the t-shirt off and wiped himself down with it a little as he looked for a change of clothes and grabbed a towel. Before he got into the shower, he heard Spencer talking on the phone. He ended the call and Troy went over to him. He stood too close then stepped back.

"I'm sweaty and I stink, sorry."

"It's fine. Looks good on you," Spencer said as he looked at his half naked body out of the corner of his eye.

"Sounds like you might have been making plans for tonight," Troy said. What he overheard made him worry that Spencer found someone better to hang out with.

"No, my friend Donna was telling me where she was going to be in case she needed an emergency pickup. You have plans?"

"I'm going to shower. Later I was going to look up this club on Walker Street. I heard someone mention it but I didn't catch the name."

"That's probably Stryde. It's not exactly on Walker. It's kind of hidden away. You have to take a few twists and turns to get there, but it's a good place for a hook-up. I'll draw a map in case the GPS fails you. I had trouble finding it the

first time I went." Spencer flipped through the magazines and random papers on the coffee table for something to draw on, then he gave up. "I'll draw it on my phone and send it."

"Couldn't you come with me?" Troy said hopefully.

"I thought this was a solo mission."

"If I go alone, I'll have a terrible time and come back alone. Or I might even give up and go to a movie. I told you I have no luck without you. I need you. Come on, be my wingman?" Troy gave him puppy dog eyes so he had no choice but to say yes.

"I'll go if you want me to."

"Great. Now I know I'll have a good time," Troy said. He shot Spencer a big grin and rushed to go shower and change.

After feeling exhausted from running, Troy was now excited and energized. It wasn't because he was going to some club. Until Spencer agreed to come with him, going to the club was more like a chore. It was a necessary step in his new life so he could hook up with someone and get a taste of everything he had missed out on.

Now those anonymous guys he was supposed to meet were fading into the background. This was a night out with Spencer and that was a whole other thing. Spencer was guaranteed fun. Afterward they might even hook up again or even take it a step further. Though the standoffish vibe he got from him didn't bode well.

Going to that club might loosen him up. As he got under the shower and soaped up, Troy pictured Spencer dancing, shaking his ass to a pounding rhythm. That was a beautiful sight. Troy couldn't help it. He started thinking about what he wanted to do to that awesome ass.

He pictured looking into Spencer's eyes as he fucked him. That didn't seem like a casual thing to do. It might mean too much to make Spencer his first. They were already too close.

Spencer was the only man he had been with. He was the first guy he kissed, the first one he sucked off and who sucked him off. Troy shuddered and groaned thinking about how good that felt.

The whole time he was working his cock with his fist faster and faster, thinking how everything Spencer did to him felt so good. But no matter how hard he jerked off, he couldn't get rid of his obsession with fucking Spencer.

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As Spencer heard Troy start up the shower, he replayed his earlier question in his mind then replied more honestly. "No, I don't want to be your wingman. I don't want to show you where you can pick up guys. But I just can't say no to you or stay away from you."

Then he thought of Troy's bright smile when he agreed. When he acted so

happy over every little thing, Spencer felt like he would do anything for him. Spencer kicked himself and hoped tonight wouldn't be as painful as he was afraid it might be. He was dreading going to a club with Troy and looking forward to it at the same time. That kind of confusion was his usual state of being these days all because of Troy.

From the meandering path through the dark streets, Spencer and Troy emerged into a world of bodies, lights and music. The music had a throbbing beat Spencer could feel like a pulse of every man in the place. As lights played over his face, Troy looked thrilled to be there.

Though Spencer was surprised that Troy wanted to go out with him instead of going out alone, for him, being seen with a hot guy wasn't at all bed. Spencer soaked up all the looks of envy, even if they weren't deserved.

He wasn't dying to let these guys know that Troy was up for grabs. Spencer didn't want to share him. The thought of Troy with anyone else gave him a horrible, sick feeling that he had no right to, but there it was anyway.

As they worked their way through the crowd, plenty of guys there made their interest in Troy perfectly obvious. The two of them got some beers and Spencer kept himself busy by glaring at all the guys drooling over Troy. While he was doing that, Spencer didn't notice the guy who was staring at him.

"Spence, I used to be able to get your attention easier than this," a familiar voice said and Spencer finally turned to see that Alan had sidled up to him. "So what are you up to these days?" he asked, getting too close.

Spencer stepped back and his shoulder hit the guy to his right.

"Bumping into guys," Spencer said. He looked around and noticed that Troy was a few feet away, talking to some hunk. That's why he was here after all. Not wanting to see them hitting it off, Spencer turned his focus back on Alan.

He and Alan had fooled around a little, but never developed a real connection. Alan was a good-looking guy, and his tattoos were cool, but compared to Troy... What the hell was he doing comparing him to Troy? He was fixated on his roommate, and once they were over and done, Spencer was going to be ruined for all other guys. That was an awesome future to look forward to.

As he and Alan chatted for a while, Spencer did his best not to lead him on. If he wanted to hook up again, Spencer wasn't available. That wasn't really true. He and Troy weren't exclusive. It was just that as long as he and Troy had this meaningless, temporary thing going on, Spencer couldn't even think of being with anyone else.

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Troy had been eager to come to the club, but once there he hung back. He noticed guys smiling at him, sending him signals. Troy enjoyed the attention

but also brushed it off and stuck close to Spencer.

When Troy finally found himself flirting with someone, he saw Spencer talking to some tall, skinny guy with tattoos climbing up his neck. Troy wanted to wring that skinny, tattooed neck. Instead he smiled at the guy he was supposed to be flirting with. Damn, he should have never stepped away from Spencer. If he saw him walk away with that guy, Troy wasn't sure what he was going to do. Other than act like a fool.

The guy with Spencer noticed him staring. As Spencer's guy gave him an appraising look, Troy squirmed a little. Why did he feel like he wasn't going to get a passing grade? He turned away from him and found himself face to face with full lips, a sharp jaw and amazing eyes.

Troy's guy was tall too. If he asked this guy if he was a male model, it wouldn't be a come-on. It would be an honest question. Troy just stared at him while worrying that Spencer would be gone the next time he looked his way.

As they chatted, Troy never got to ask him if he was a model. The guy talked about living in Australia and surfing. It sounded pretty awesome, but Troy was only using the conversation to keep from staring murderously at the tattooed guy intruding on Spencer's personal space. He couldn't believe how much it bothered him. Troy was there to pick up someone. He had no right to get pissed off that Spencer might do the same thing.

When Spencer finally walked away from the tattooed guy, Troy was so relieved. He couldn't wait to ditch his male model guy either.

"That looked like it was going well," Spencer said when Troy rushed over to join him.

"It was OK. I just wasn't feeling it. What about your guy?" Troy asked.

"That's someone I know. We went out a few times. But you walked away from a guy who was the definition of gorgeous. I didn't realize you were going to be so picky," Spencer scolded him.

"For my first time, I'm going to be at least a little picky," Troy said while staring at his drink.

"You mean you were planning to...?"

"Not planning, just considering the possibility that things might go there," Troy said and avoided Spencer's eye. He didn't want him to know that he had been thinking about fucking him.

Spencer punched him in the arm lightly and gave him some words of encouragement. "There's no rush. You don't want to waste your first time on just anyone."

"I wasn't planning on saving myself for the one," Troy said, not wanting Spencer to get the wrong idea.

"In that case, just wait for someone you can't take your eyes off," Spencer said.

Good advice. And who was Troy staring at all night, worrying he would walk out with someone else? Spencer was talking about himself. He just didn't

know it, and Troy was too scared to tell him. He was the only one he wanted to fuck. It was a waste of time trying to pick up other guys until he got Spencer out of his system.

Chapter 11

That night, Spencer had a much better time than he expected, maybe because Troy stuck close to him the rest of their time at the club. He even danced with Spencer, but not too eagerly. By the time they were ready to go home, both he and Troy were good and buzzed. Maybe that explained what came out of Troy's mouth as they walked through the club doors.

"I can't stop wanting you."

Spencer stared at him, not sure that he heard him right. That was definitely the beer talking.

It was very dark and a little chilly as they headed home under the gray light of the moon. Wind was blowing in the trees that lined the street. They huddled close, bumping into each other as they careened back and forth across the moonlit sidewalk. Troy was painfully aware of Troy's body, big and strong next to him, radiating heat as a cool wind stirred the air on a summer night.

Troy was only an inch or two taller, but Spencer felt small next to him. He had felt that way at the club too. He knew no one there would even glance at him. Troy would block him out of sight like the sun outshines the moon, makes it invisible as soon as it rises in the morning. But Spencer was pretty sure he wouldn't shine no matter what time of day it was.

"That's me." Spencer pointed up at the sky.

"You're the man on the moon?"

"I am the moon. You're the sun, big and bright. As long as you shine, no one can see me," Spencer said.

Troy denied it. "That's not true. Sometimes you can see the moon in the daytime, and it's an awesome sight. Plus no one looks at the sun and admires it. People turn away from it. People like looking at the moon. It's easy on the eyes." While he said all this, Troy wasn't looking at the moon. He was looking at Spencer.

"You're definitely the sun. You're too hot to touch," Spencer told him as he lightly placed his hand on Troy's chest.

"That's your fault. You have me burning up."

Spencer didn't think he deserved the credit. "Me? What about all those guys back there? I think they might have got you going."

"What about you? Did you see something you liked?" Troy asked and gave Spencer a sideways look.

"Anywhere we go, I'm not likely to find a guy who's hotter than you," Spencer told him, not as a compliment, but as a statement of fact.

Troy looked relieved. It was almost like he thought Spencer might run off with some other guy.

Once they got home, they sat down to watch TV together. Yeah, right. Within minutes, they were eyeing each other and only pretending to watch

TV. After a night out, against all odds, Spencer still ended up with Troy. He just wasn't sure what to do about that.

Spencer tilted his head and looked at Troy intently. An electric charge filled the air between them. Spencer felt a little uneasy. As Troy leaned in toward him, Spencer's heart beat like crazy.

"Watch yourself," Troy whispered in his ear.

"Am I in trouble?" Spencer asked in a husky voice that betrayed his excitement.

"You might be," Troy told him and let his lips graze his earlobe and then the side of his neck.

Spencer didn't say a word. He shifted sideways on the couch and swung a leg over. He came to rest on Troy's lap and felt Troy's hands land on his ass. Taking a firm hold, Troy squeezed his ass over his jeans. Spencer took a deep breath as he was pressed into him. Then he dived in for a deep kiss.

Coming up for air, Spencer stared at Troy like he was daring him or maybe begging him. He was sitting on top of Troy's hard thighs, not to mention his hard erection and his need was building, growing out of control.

"You have plans for that?" Spencer asked as he looked down pointedly at the bulge pushing up the front of Troy's jeans.

"I thought maybe you did," Troy said with a wicked smirk.

"I can think of a thing or two." Spencer rolled his hips so his ass rubbed over Troy's rock hard cock.

"Are you saying we should...? I mean..." Troy didn't finish what he was saying. He just grabbed Spencer and kissed him. When he let him go, he looked a lot more decisive. "I want to fuck you," he said.

At those words, Spencer heart jumped in his chest. Faced with Spencer's silence, Troy started to look nervous again.

"That would make me your first... everything," Spencer said.

"Who better?" Troy said, ready to rush ahead.

"OK." Spencer mouthed his agreement. He couldn't seem to summon his voice to actually say it, but that was good enough for Troy. He dragged Spencer off to his bedroom, got condoms out of his pocket and lube out of his nightstand.

Standing next to Troy's bed, they only stared at each other for a while. Spencer's heart was pounding but he tried to act and sound calm. He was supposed to be Troy's guide. Right now he wanted to laugh at that idea. What the hell did he know?

Hurriedly he pulled off Troy's t-shirt. He didn't want to give himself time to think. Troy took off his as well and his hands got busy with Spencer's fly. Spencer was out of his jeans and boxers and feeling Troy's hands groping his ass.

Spencer's hands were shaking as he unbuttoned Troy's fly. Troy was too big for a comfortable fit. He didn't want Troy to see his worry though. He only wanted Troy to see that he wanted him so he kissed him. He was going to give

that man a first fuck he deserved. He wanted to satisfy him down to his bones.

Once he had Troy naked in front of him, Spencer just took in the sight. Thighs thick and strong, muscular arms and chest, scary big cock – he was perfect. Spencer felt so lucky, but what he couldn't believe was how Troy was looking at him with so much craving and lust, like he couldn't wait to have him. That just made Spencer terrified that he wouldn't live up to being Troy's first.

That's when Troy grabbed him around the waist and pulled him close. "I just hope you like it," he said while staring into Spencer's eyes with an eager but anxious look.

"I promise you I'll like it." Spencer almost told him he would love it because it was him, but that was something he might say to a lover, and that's not what this was about.

Troy leaned his forehead against Spencer's and he sighed.

"You're amazing," Troy said looking down Spencer's body. His eyes were hooded, filled with lust. There was no doubt that he wanted Spencer just as much as Spencer wanted him.

Chapter 12

Holding Spencer in his arms, with both of them naked and hard, Troy took a minute to breathe. His hands slipped around Spencer's narrow hips to his nicely rounded ass. Spencer might be skinny but he was well padded where it counted. Troy's cock got even harder when he thought about slamming in there with every hard thrust cushioned by that sweet ass.

He moved Spencer over to the bed. As Spencer lay back, Troy looked down on him and cursed.

"You look too good," Troy told him.

Spencer stayed silent and moved down. He pulled his knees up. Holding his legs up brought his ass higher. The new position offered Troy a better view. Now he was speechless and all he could do was kiss him.

He kissed his neck and down his chest. Troy grazed his nipples with his fingertips and watched them harden while Spencer shuddered a little and let out a light gasp. Spencer shifted down so he was in the right position and so was Troy.

Running his hand down the inside of Spencer's leg, Troy cupped his balls and heard him moan. His hand traveled down to Spencer's ass. Fingertips sliding down the crack, he brushed his index finger over his hole. Spencer grunted and his eyelids fluttered closed.

Troy couldn't believe his eyes. Spencer's skin was smooth and tight over his slim body. His ass was perfect and irresistible. Troy had only teased the hole with no pressure, just soft exploring that made the opening respond, enticing him to push in.

With shaking hands he grabbed the lube. Coating his fingers, he kissed the inside of Spencer's thigh. He slid in a finger gently. With his eyes closed, he focused on Spencer's body as it responded to the intrusion. He tightened around Troy's finger inside him.

Troy leaned down between Spencer's legs and licked his balls as he slowly worked another lubed fingertip inside him. The squeezing of Spencer's ass and his moan made Troy shudder. He watched his fingers slide in, stretching Spencer as he writhed. Spencer's choked off sounds of appreciation told him he was doing it right.

He hadn't expected Spencer to be so unbelievably tight. Opening him up was a challenge. The shiver of his thighs as he fingered his hole was transmitted to Troy. He couldn't wait to be inside him.

Troy didn't think his cock could get any harder, but it did. Hurriedly, he added another finger. He heard Spencer pant and his whole body tensed.

"Too much?" Troy asked.

"No, too good," Spencer said as his body relaxed, his opening pulsing. If more was better, then Troy couldn't wait for him to take his cock.

"Can I...?" Troy started to ask, his voice coming out between gritted teeth.

"Yes," Spencer said before Troy could get the words out.

Thank God. Troy needed to be inside him. Rolling on a condom, he lowered his head to Spencer's cock for a lick or two, just a taste that only made it harder for him to stay in control. Now he was more than ready.

The first contact, between the head of his cock and Spencer's hole, made his head roll back. He groaned and told himself to take it slow and not lose it too soon. With a steady push, the head of his cock started sinking into the tight heat of Spencer's body. Spencer let out a deep moan.

"Yes, oh, God yes." Spencer's voice trembled and his whole body shook.

It was a tight fit, leaving Troy breathless, sweating, shaking from pushing and not pushing.

"Damn," he gasped as he felt Spencer's ass grip him like a vise. He forced himself to stay in control as he pressed in. Spencer was moaning, calling his name and urging him on.

Finally as deep as he could go, Troy settled himself against Spencer's body for a long moment while his mind reeled. So many sensations flooded him. He stopped breathing and just held on to Spencer, rooted so deep inside him.

It felt too good. He got worried he would come right then. Spencer's body squeezed around him in the most delicious way possible, and Troy was ready to give him his soul.

Troy stayed in control and pulled back for another go. Pushing in again, Troy watched as Spencer's beautiful ass took in his cock with excruciating slowness. The pressure was intense, searing hot around the head of his cock then the rest. Troy felt like he might pass out from the pure pleasure of it.

Spencer was looking up at him, his beautiful, dark eyes burning into him, wordlessly telling Troy to give him more. Troy couldn't take that. With every thrust, he was going out of his mind, pumping harder and faster all the time. Spencer's eyes and his cries of pleasure were too much. Troy was on fire for this man. He wouldn't last.

His whole world was shaking as he hammered Spencer like a madman. He didn't expect he would get to fuck him this hard. That's when Spencer's back arched. His whole body clenched as he came, shooting come all over Troy's chest. It was amazing, the best thing he ever felt in his life. Troy was coming, growling through an orgasm that blew his mind.

He felt like he was falling forever only to end up in Spencer's welcoming arms, hot, sweat drenched and sticky. Troy grabbed him and wrapped his arms around him. He held him tight and couldn't let him go, not even to breathe, not after what they did.

After a kiss that was longer and deeper than any they ever shared, Troy started to come to his senses a little.

"I couldn't slow down," he mumbled into the crook of Spencer's neck.

"Why would you? That was fucktastic," Spencer told him with a blissful smile.

"I thought I might be doing it too hard but I couldn't stop myself," Troy admitted.

"Hard is good. I liked it. But with other guys..." Spencer started to add.

"Who cares about them," Troy said and took hold of Spencer. "You liked it. I only care that you like it," Troy said in his ear.

"Well, fuck, saying things like that can give a guy the wrong idea," Spencer told him as they both did what they could to clean each other up.

Troy saw that his eyes were starting to close. Spent and melting into Troy's embrace, he mumbled his appreciation in broken words and unfinished sentences and then promptly fell asleep.

Hadn't they gone out so Troy could scope out other guys, pick up someone new. Spencer was just supposed to be his wingman, and here he was, basking in the afterglow with him, wanting to stay close and touch him now and then to prolong the feeling.

This arrangement was a bad idea. Being with Spencer felt too good to give up. He was supposed to be getting ready for other guys not getting stuck on one.

Troy squeezed him tight anyway. Even if he didn't get to hold him for long, he could have him right now. He had this weird feeling that Spencer belonged to him and only him. Oh, wow, sex sure had messed with his head. He wondered how long this weird, intense feeling would take to wear off. Until then, hell, he was just going to enjoy it.

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Waking up in the darkness, Spencer remembered getting fucked good and hard. Like the sheets, Spencer was a tangled mess. Troy was still holding him, and that was a surprise.

Wrapped around him, Troy's arms felt so right. Spencer could already feel himself drifting off like Troy wasn't going anywhere. Wait. He was in Troy's bed. Troy wasn't going to leave, Spencer was.

With a groan, he started to drag himself away from Troy's strong and warm embrace. Only Troy wasn't letting him go.

"I'll sleep better with you here," Troy said, surprising him.

"I can be talked into staying the night. We already proved that you make a good pillow."

"Good. It's weird to want company even when you sleep, but it's kind of nice," Troy said, slurring his words a little as he started to fall asleep again.

Spencer agreed. Though he acted like it was no big deal, Spencer was secretly very pleased that Troy wanted him to stay. As a follow up to crazy hot sex, being in the same bed wasn't half bad.

Troy's big body close to his made him feel a different kind of amazing. Spencer was suffused with warmth inside and out. He practically moaned as he settled against Troy. Soon he was happily asleep.

Chapter 13

Stepping out of the shower the next morning, Spencer found himself staring at the fuzzy shape of himself in the fogged up mirror. He let out a long, heartfelt sigh. So much room for improvement. And to think a guy like Troy was giving him the time of day.

The mirror was still foggy, but Spencer didn't wipe it. He didn't want to see his skinny body, with his wet hair and hopeless eyes staring back. It would be easier on his ego if he went out there and saw Troy this morning without that image of himself fresh in his mind.

Troy was so gorgeous that Spencer found it easy to forget himself when he was with him. He got lost in him and stopped thinking about how he didn't measure up. That was not just the effect of Troy's looks. It was Troy himself. He was so easygoing and sweet, not stuck up at all. Spencer wanted to hug him and kiss him just for being himself.

But once Troy got to know more people, he wouldn't want to hang out with Spencer as much. Spencer sighed. He knew he would miss him terribly.

Getting up the courage, he wiped the steamed up mirror. He didn't like what he saw. Spencer wrinkled his nose as he looked at his face in the mirror. He frowned with distaste at the rest of him.

He was too pale and looked even paler with his dark hair. If only his hair would behave, but it always looked like he had slept on it, which he did a lot. But then he washed it and styled it, kind of, and it still looked like he slept on it. Who cared about his stupid hair? It was the body, that damn skinny body, that was the problem.

He heard his name spoken through the door, and he jumped.

"I'm almost done," Spencer said.

"Can I come in?" Troy asked.

"I'll..." Spencer started to say then he swung the door open. Who was he to deny a man a chance to join him when he was half naked in the steamy, hot bathroom.

Troy smiled at him when he saw him standing there with only a towel wrapped around his hips. How could he look like he liked what he saw? More than that, he looked like he desperately wanted this skinny body in front of him.

It might be undeserving, but if Troy wanted it, Spencer would give it to him. Troy slowly reached for the end of the towel where it was tucked in to hold it closed. He yanked it free in one quick move.

Now Spencer stood in front of him with his cock steadily hardening under Troy's feral gaze. Troy's rumbling groan told him that he liked what he saw very much. Then Troy kneeled.

Seeing Troy and Spencer coming out of the bathroom together once again, Greg gave them a withering look. Spencer ducked into his room and got

dressed fast. He pulled at his clothes discontentedly. It wasn't their fault he didn't have enough going on to fill them out. Still, Spencer had to smile when he thought about what he and Troy had just done and everything they did last night. Maybe it wasn't top of the line, but his body was serviceable.

Going into the kitchen, Spencer tried to sidestep Greg's inquisition by going to the fruit bowl and grabbing an apple.

"You don't really expect me to buy that innocent, 'who me' act you're putting on, are you?" Greg asked.

"Fine. Guilty as charged," Spencer said as he headed for the door with his apple.

Greg shook his head. Well, Spencer didn't really expect him to approve. That was a pretty mild reaction actually. After all this was the man who flipped his lid when Spencer forgot a pair of his shoes in the living room. Spencer was more surprised to have Greg follow him out the door.

"Does this thing with Troy have strings attached yet or are you still fooling yourself?" Greg asked him.

Spencer didn't like either choice. "It's just for fun."

"I live here too, you know. I'm not seeing you bringing home anyone but Troy for fun times," Greg pointed out as they went down the stairs.

"I'm very selective," Spencer said defensively.

"You're a one man kind of guy. And the one you picked is a guy who doesn't feel the same way," Greg said. Then he made a prediction. "You are going to get your heart broken."

"My heart is not involved in this," Spencer claimed.

"Pull your head out of your ass."

Spencer stepped outside in front of the building and turned to Greg. "I'm just having a good time while helping Troy enjoy life to the fullest," Spencer declared and walked away from Greg so he wouldn't have to hear the truth. Spencer had to keep lying to himself. The only other choice was to admit the truth and lose Troy. He couldn't face that. Being with him felt too good. Spencer wasn't going to give him up until he had to.

Even once Troy was ready to move on, Spencer would never want to lose him completely. At first he was just a total horndog for Troy, but he had come to really care about him. And he was still new at being gay. He needed friends as much as he needed the stupid experience he was after.

Spencer hoped to be his friend for the long haul. He would just have to look away when Troy flirted with other men, kissed and touched them. Or he could just murder them. No, he was nowhere near being ready to be just friends with Troy.

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Troy's first was a skinny guy who couldn't get up in the morning without being dragged out of bed kicking and screaming. But just thinking of Spencer

made him smile. He made all the difficulties of coming out worth it. Now Troy just had to deal with the aftereffects of fucking him.

Troy was officially obsessed. Sex with a guy was something else. And Spencer... Troy couldn't go anywhere, do anything, without images from that night replaying in front of his eyes. He did his work blindly and now he was walking home the same way. It would be a miracle if he didn't get run over.

Troy could still see Spencer the way he looked on the morning after they fucked. He was still asleep. The light from the window was golden on his skin as his back dipped just above the curve of his ass. The patch of sunlight on Spencer's back shifted as the breeze blew through the leaves of the trees outside. Troy leaned down and kissed the spots while they moved. He felt Spencer stir under the touch of his lips. He wanted him to turn over so he could place his lips on the head of his cock and kiss him there.

Just to think of it made Troy hot and hard all over again. He wanted to keep Spencer all to himself. Never let any other man touch him.

No. That wasn't right. Troy couldn't afford to be possessive of a guy when he planned to make him the first of many.

Despite that, for some reason, Troy wished that he had been Spencer's first. If he was the first man inside him, the first to fuck him, he could make Spencer his and only his. How weird was that?

Troy wondered if these kinds of caveman thoughts were just part of fucking someone with a passion, like he had done to Spencer, and certainly never with any girl. What he felt when he was inside Spencer was so crazy. It probably just triggered other crazy feelings that he had no right to, like possessiveness.

But if he couldn't be Spencer's first, he wanted to make Spencer forget everyone but him. OK, more caveman thinking. What the fuck? Troy was finally getting some, and he was crazier than when he was dying for it. Getting to fuck Spencer was supposed to calm him down. It turned out that Spencer was an aphrodisiac not an antidote.

Chapter 14

That night Spencer was taking him to a party at his friend Donna's. He told Troy that he might find someone to hook up with, but no guarantees.

"Donna does know some hot guys, but too many of them are straight," Spencer said as they walked to a house in the suburbs.

The neighborhood was very quiet and ordinary until they neared a house with too many cars parked in front. Music reached them even on the sidewalk. Troy looked up and down the street and remembered his parents' house. It was on a street like this, and when someone had a party, it looked and sounded about the same.

Troy shook off the memories. This was supposed to be a party. He transferred here so all that stuff back home wouldn't weigh him down. He only wanted to move forward.

Going up to the front door, Spencer knocked for a while before a short haired brunette with a great body opened the door.

"Parents out of town, college kid throws a party, this is classic 80's movies stuff," Spencer said after he introduced Troy and Donna to each other.

"I think it's every decade and not just in the movies," Donna told him.

"I wouldn't know. My parents never left town without dragging us kids with them," Spencer complained as they went in and he looked around at who was there. Soon he spotted a few people he knew and Troy got introduced around some more.

After they grabbed drinks, he and Spencer parked by the open, sliding glass doors where it was cooler. Most of the guys there ignored them, but a few shot them looks of interest. Troy noticed one guy give Spencer a big, friendly smile. He was slight but cute with square glasses on his nose. He and Spencer would make a perfect nerdy couple.

No way. That wasn't happening. Troy made sure the guy was looking and he leaned in to whisper in Spencer's ear. Getting closer than he needed to, he might as well have tagged him "Property of Troy".

All he said was, "You think there's any decent food?"

"Knowing Donna, probably not. Just bargain brand chips dumped into bowls," Spencer told him.

Troy didn't care about snacks as long as the cute, mini-nerd still kept glancing toward Spencer every now and then like he wasn't giving up yet. Not that Troy was trying to sabotage Spencer's potential hook-up exactly.

What the hell was he doing? Throwing a possessive arm over Spencer's shoulders – that wasn't a big deal. He let his hand drop down his back then slip around to Spencer's hip. Troy was only being friendly and a little extra handsy. It wasn't his fault if his gesture was read as Troy telling all the guys in there to keep their grubby hands off his Spencer. Except he wasn't his Spencer. How come he couldn't remember that for more than one second?

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Since Troy mentioned snacks, Spencer went to see if there was anything decent that Donna might have served by mistake. He didn't find anything good, but he did notice how many guys were showing an interest in Troy.

Troy never failed to grab attention wherever they went. This was only more of the same. Spencer just had to make peace with it. One guy in particular had his eye on Troy. He wasn't the best looking guy who had ever hit on Troy, but he was the best looking guy at this party, other than Troy himself.

Spencer had no right to be jealous no matter how thoroughly that scruffy guy with piercing blue eyes checked out Troy from head to toe. That was straight up an eye-fucking. And what was Spencer going to do about it? Tell that guy to peel his eyeballs off his boyfriend? No. He was going to gulp down the rest of his beer in one go, and then try to act cool.

The only thing that saved him from having a meltdown was that Troy said two or three words to the guy, gave him half a smile, then turned back to Spencer.

Spencer frowned at him. "What's that guy missing?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe I'm just not ready to branch out to other guys. That's still unknown territory. One guy is enough for me. For now," Troy added quickly, just in case Spencer thought he was proposing.

Spencer wasn't reading anything into it. He wasn't that dumb. Though he did like the sound of "One guy is enough for me." He wondered if that meant that Troy was looking forward to having a boyfriend, not just screwing around. Spencer knew he wouldn't be Troy's one guy, but he was still curious about that.

If the subject of Troy's eventual boyfriend didn't make his heart hurt, Spencer would have asked him about it. But he better not. A conversation like that was a potential minefield. Better stay on the safe path. Stepping away from Troy, Spencer went to grab a handful of cheese puffs from a side table.

That's when some skinny girl bumped into Spencer. Grinning at him while she hung on his arm heavily, she looked pretty sloshed.

"Can you even stand?" Spencer asked her. He looked around for some place she could sit down, but all the seats were taken.

"I wanna lie down," she said and looked at him with her eyes crossed. She was probably cute when her eyes weren't crossed like that.

"I'll lean you over here," Spencer said and maneuvered her next to the side table. "This looks sturdier than me. Grab hold if you need to." Spencer moved her hand off his arm and had her hang on to the furniture instead. He was about to ask her who her friends were so someone else could look out for her. A heavy hand on the back of his neck shoved him down. His forehead hit the table and Spencer almost bit his tongue. Cursing, Spencer tried to shake off the hand that had grabbed hold of him.

"She looks ready to party, doesn't she? But she's mine until I kick her ass to the curb for being a slut," a voice hissed in his ear. The hand on the back of his neck was removed. Spencer straightened just in time for the hand to land a slap to the back of his head. The force of the slap made him stagger and told him that the guy was strong.

Turning, Spencer saw that the guy was big too, looming over him. Slammed back by a hand on his chest, Spencer found he was wedged into a corner. Fuck. Past the bulk of this guy, he could see people backing away. But not everyone. One imposing male form was coming toward him.

It was Troy barreling forward. With one deliberate movement, he had the guy by the back of his shirt and one arm. That arm got twisted back almost to the point where the joint might snap.

The guy was bigger than him, but Troy's hold on his arm was paralyzing. Unless the guy wanted his arm dislocated, he had to stay still.

"Did this asshole hurt you?" Troy asked gruffly, his eyes deadly serious as he looked at Spencer.

Spencer felt as if his answer would decide if this guy was going to leave the party in one piece. Troy twisted the guy's arm harder until Spencer said he was OK.

Now the drunk girl was yelling at her boyfriend for calling her a slut while Donna pushed her way through the crowd looking pissed and demanding to know what the fuck was going on.

"Ted was messing with Spencer," someone told her.

"My Spencer?" she said and moved as if she was going to clobber that jerk, Ted. Instead she just had some guys throw him out. "Don't be gentle with him," she told them.

"Is your head OK?" Troy asked Spencer and gingerly lifted his hair off his forehead. The two of them had ducked into Donna's parents' bedroom, which was off limits to everyone.

"It's not bad," Spencer told him while enjoying the way Troy frowned with concern.

"And your neck?" he asked.

"It's fine." Spencer added a reassuring smile to his words, but then he wondered, "How exactly did I get myself into that? I thought I wore my gayness on my sleeve."

Troy looked him up and down.

"What's the verdict?" Spencer asked when Troy didn't say anything.

"Verdict? I was just checking you out for my own sleazy reasons." Troy's hands slid around to cup his ass.

Spencer got his point and smiled at him.

Troy moved in closer and warned him, "If you keep looking at me with those pretty eyes, bad things are going to happen to you."

"What pretty eyes? You're crazy," Spencer said. Hearing something like

that, he didn't know where to look.

Troy kissed his eyelids as he blinked in confusion. "These pretty eyes," he said.

Spencer grabbed at his arms and Troy placed quick kisses all over his face.

"The guy you were talking to had pretty eyes," Spencer said.

"Who? Eyes? Did he have eyes?"

Spencer had to laugh. He stopped when Troy planted a deep, hungry kiss on him. Soon they were grinding against each other, and Troy was eyeing the big bed.

"Donna would kick us to death for just thinking what you're thinking," Spencer informed him. "But you did come to my rescue. You deserve a reward and I remember a walk in closet." Spencer led the way in there.

"You sure you're OK. I mean your head..." Troy started to ask.

"Get in there," Spencer told him. "In a minute, you're going to make me forget all about that."

They went in, but left the light off. Careful not to disturb anything, they huddled in the corner. Jammed in between winter coats, Spencer felt Troy's hand on his crotch, squeezing him lightly. He thrust into his touch and moaned his name.

"I think I like being your protector," Troy whispered in his ear.

Troy's hand moved up and under his t-shirt. While lightly nibbling his earlobe, he teased Spencer's nipples with his fingertips. Troy freed Spencer's cock and had his erection hard in his fist. His hand on Troy's cock moved slowly, hypnotically up and down.

Panting, Spencer caressed the ridges of Troy's abs then his touch trailed lower. Undoing his zipper, Spencer slipped his hand inside and rubbed his hard cock. Spencer tightened his grip squeezing him and Troy's head dropped to Spencer's shoulder. He moaned low right in Spencer's ear as he pumped into his hand.

Stroking his back with his other hand, Troy worked his way down to his ass. As he inched down the crack, Troy grunted. He pressed in a fingertip until he felt Spencer's asshole give. Spencer's opening welcomed Troy's finger and pulsed around it.

Realizing they were close, Spencer pulled Troy to the floor. He had them lie head to toe and finish with each other's cocks in their mouths. It was amazing to suck and be sucked at the same time. Spencer felt like he didn't know where he ended and Troy began. It was so insane and good.

"I never did that before," Spencer told Troy as they left Donna's house. The music was fading behind them as they walked home in the glow of the streetlights.

"Suck a guy off in a closet?" Troy asked.

"Sixty-nine."

Troy looked at him and grinned. "OK. You're welcome."

"I wasn't thanking you," Spencer said and backhanded his arm. "And don't you get arrogant."

"It is nice to do something that's new to you too."

"It's all new," Spencer said under his breath and looked up at the sky. The streetlights were behind them now and only the moon lit their way home.

Having half heard him, Troy looked at him questioningly. Spencer didn't want to say any more. Even as he enjoyed Troy putting his arm around his shoulders, Spencer couldn't admit the truth. Being with Troy was like nothing he had ever felt before. Telling him that would be a mistake. Feeling that way was an even bigger mistake that was going to cost him in the end.

Knowing that, Spencer still reached for Troy's hand on his shoulder and pulled it over to his chest. That brought them even closer, and Spencer liked it too much to let go. He liked the casual way Troy's big arm draped over him. While Spencer put his own arm around his waist, he watched Troy's face light up with a smile while his brown eyes reflected the light of the moon.

Chapter 15

The next day, Spencer was visiting Marlene at work to report on Donna's party. He walked to the strip mall where brown roofs and brown lettering identified the nondescript storefronts. Among them was the fabric store where Marlene worked.

Spencer went in to the accompaniment of the old fashioned bell above the door. Spools of colorful fabrics hung in rows while others were stacked on top of each other and leaning in corners. There was always a group of older women by the cutting table. Spencer wasn't sure if they were the same ones or a different bunch each time. Marlene ignored them as she waved him over to her register. While telling her about the party, he couldn't avoid mentioning Troy.

"You rank amateur. What did you get yourself into?" she practically yelled at him.

"What are you talking about?" Spencer said as the old ladies all turned their heads to stare at him.

"Your moony face as soon as you mentioned his name," she said and jabbed her finger in his face. With her extremely long nails, she might as well have pulled a knife on him.

"It's just sex. Good sex. That's all," Spencer claimed. Then he slouched miserably and admitted the truth. "Maybe I'm into him more than I should be, but that's not the deal we made."

"Deals are made to be broken. You two should sit down and have a talk." As soon as she said the words, Marlene made a disgusted face.

Spencer called her on it. "You hate your own advice and you expect me to follow it?"

Marlene shrugged. "Not really. You two are destined to implode from internal tension and general fuck-upedness."

"Are you sure you're my friend? You seem bent on destroying my confidence and my winning spirit," Spencer accused her. He might be pitiful, but she had no pity for him at all.

"You have friend confused with cheerleader."

"You have friend confused with hired assassin," Spencer told her.

She was totally up for that. "In that case let me fulfill my assassin duties. Whatever you might feel for Troy, there is no way in hell he feels the same way about you." She paused for a beat while Spencer died inside. "But just in case he does, you need to fish or cut bait."

"What?"

"It's something my grandfather says to indecisive, wishy-washy pussies."

"Fuck you and fuck your grandfather. How is Greg more sympathetic than you? He's my landlord you're my alleged..."

"Assassin," she finished for him. "Quit whining and go get your man from whatever slut factory he's holed up in, drag him home and fuck his brains

out."

"What do I look like to you? None of this is muscle," Spencer said while motioning down his body.

"You don't need muscle. You need balls."

"Which you have plenty of. So where is your boyfriend, oh wise and ballsy one?" Spencer stared at her then leaned in over her register. "I can't wait for you to fall hard and get your cold, dead heart pulverized."

Marlene smiled at him with approval. "See, now you're getting into the spirit of things. There might be hope for you yet."

Spencer left with his mind clouded by thoughts of Troy. Talk to him? Such a simple suggestion and so stupid. There was no way he was doing that.

Like Troy would want to settle for the first guy he slept with, a skinny, nerdy guy, who only lucked into being his first because he lived in the room next door. Spencer might be pissed at Marlene for being so viciously blunt, but she was right. His feelings for Troy spelled doom, and he only had total wretchedness to look forward to.

When he jumped into this, Spencer didn't care what the terms were. He ignored the warning signals going off in his head. In most ways nothing had changed. He still craved Troy, his kiss and his touch. Getting what he wanted only made him want more. His whole body ached with the need to be wrapped in Troy's big, strong arms.

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That day at work, Troy had a flashback to the way things used to be. A new girl asked him out on a date. It was her first day, and she had flirted with him whenever she got a chance.

Troy wasn't surprised when she asked him out, but his reply was something new. "I'm gay," he told her and he couldn't keep a smile off his face.

She frowned for a second then she said, "I bet you're seeing someone. The way you smiled is a total giveaway."

"Me? Kind of," he said. He wasn't sure if that was true or not. But what could he say about Spencer? That he was a guy he thought about all the time? That quitting time was like a starter's pistol going off, bringing him almost within reach of him? That Troy wanted to sprint home and tackle Spencer to the floor as soon as he walked in the door? He was kind of seeing him, and he was kind of obsessed with him. One day soon, he would be seeing lots of guys. Any day now.

On his way home from work, Troy couldn't wait to get his hands on Spencer. He was walking on the wide sidewalks under the big trees. The shade was speckled with patches of sunshine that reminded Troy of the sunbeam he had seen on Spencer's naked back right above the perfect and

irresistible curve of his ass. The line of his back was like an invitation, rising toward his shoulders, dipping before rising again to lead his eye to his ass.

Maybe the way he wanted Spencer was a little bit out of control. Every time he thought of him, Troy felt a rush of excitement. But there was another feeling lurking right behind the fiery need for Spencer's body. There was the desire to fuck him and to hold him tight. Those two things together made him want to tell Spencer to forget every other guy who might be out there.

Troy knew that he was having stupid urges like those because he never got to learn to deal with the rush of feelings that sex ignited. Since he got started late, Troy was now in too much of a hurry to experience it all at once – his first fuck with a man and his first love were getting all mixed up in his head.

If he asked Spencer for advice, he could set him straight. He could already see Spencer looking at him with pity as he tried to let him down easy. Nope. That was an experience he could do without.

Troy was in no hurry to get his heart crushed. He would be in love one day and probably regret it. What he cared about right now was sex and only sex, preferably with a really hot guy. For tonight that guy was Spencer, but that was only to start with since he was obsessed with his ass. Any day now, Troy would move on and a whole world of amazing sex would open up to him.

That pep talk was all well and good, but after Troy bounded up the stairs and saw that Spencer wasn't home, he was crushed. At first only because he couldn't get his hands on him after pining for him all day. Then he started to wonder where Spencer might be.

He might be with another man right now. Troy panicked at the thought. Why the hell did he let him go? It was all his fault if Spencer was with someone else. He should have locked him down. Fuck experience, he wanted Spencer and he wanted him now.

Troy looked at his phone then put it away. He wasn't going to text him. What he should do is go out and see who else was out there. It was too early for that, but when time was right, Troy would be living his life, not pining for Spencer.

Chapter 16

Early on a Saturday, Spencer was loitering in the hall outside of the apartment, texting and waiting for some laundry to get done. Leaning against the railing, he listened for the buzz of the dryer. What he heard instead was the squeak of the front door and running footsteps coming up the stairway. That was Troy coming up the stairs. Sweaty and out of breath, he was wearing a t-shirt and shorts. Both were stuck to him a little, making him look extra hot.

"I was wondering where you ran off to," Spencer punned.

"I have to keep in shape for all the sex I plan on having," Troy told him and grinned. "Want to take a shower with me?"

Spencer shook his head. "Already took one."

Troy's face fell.

"But I will wait for you in my room," Spencer said and watched Troy's face light up.

Looking happy, he jogged into the apartment. "Meet you there," he said over his shoulder.

An armful of his clothes fresh from the dryer and still warm got dumped on Spencer's bed. The pile of laundry kept him busy until Troy showed up at his bedroom door. His hair was wet from the shower but he had put on a fresh change of clothes. Spencer didn't know why he bothered.

"I was picturing you posed sexy and butt-naked on the bed, not fully dressed and folding laundry," Troy complained finding him bent over a stack of t-shirts.

Spencer finished folding the last t-shirt then straightened to face him. "I'm only your practice. I don't need to seduce you."

Troy confirmed it. "No, you don't. You're doing fine even without trying." He locked the door and tackled Spencer to the bed.

"Hey! Respect my hard work," Spencer said and pointed out his neatly folded t-shirts. Troy didn't look properly chastised so Spencer had to get serious. "Behave yourself. I'm ready to wrestle you into submission, you know."

Lifting himself up on his arms, Troy looked down at him and managed not to laugh in his face. Spencer took the opportunity to squirm out from under him so he could put away the t-shirts before they got dumped on the floor. Troy growled and reached for him to pull him back into bed. As he closed the t-shirt drawer, Spencer evaded him playfully. Troy went along with it then made a sudden grab for Spencer and had him pinned in an instant.

"I'm at your mercy now," Spencer said with a gleam of challenge in his eyes.

Troy smiled down at him then swooped in for a hard kiss. As he kissed him, Troy reached under his shirt and up over his abs. With Troy's hot palms on his chest, Spencer shivered. His hands were on the back of Troy's neck as his tongue explored his mouth. Spencer reached up and his fingers got lost in the

short strands of his wet hair.

Troy's muscular weight felt so right on top of him. Then Troy rubbed up against him, his hard cock distinct as it jabbed his thigh. Spencer was ready for Troy to take him right now. Troy reached down, lifted Spencer's legs up and grabbed his ass. He slid his palm around, between Spencer's legs, driving him wild. Spencer moaned in his ear and breathed hard.

"Are we going to fuck?" Troy asked hopefully.

To answer his question, Spencer reached into his nightstand drawer and tossed him condoms and lube. Troy grunted in appreciation then kissed him even harder than before.

Getting each other stripped was not a smooth operation. They grappled with each other's shirts and zippers, neither willing to back down and miss out on the chance to feel some naked skin.

Spencer didn't want to stop kissing and groping Troy, but he needed him inside. He rolled over so he was face down on the mattress, leaning on his elbows, ass up. Breathing hard, he writhed as Troy ran his hands up and down the back of his thighs and fondled his ass. He couldn't wait for Troy to fuck him again. Spencer shifted so his ass was even higher in the air and Troy groaned at this unspoken invitation.

His strong hands pushed Spencer's knees further apart so he could make room for himself between them. Taking his position, Troy started lubing him. Spencer gasped feeling Troy's finger twisting inside him. That was new. Troy paused.

"Oh, God don't stop," Spencer begged him.

Carefully, Troy worked in one more finger. Twisting his fingers gently, he made Spencer buck and moan desperately. When Troy removed his fingers and shifted on the bed, Spencer shuddered and begged mindlessly. "Please, please, please."

Troy didn't disappoint him. The head of his cock was soon at Spencer's hole, pressing in. So big, it opened him up like nothing ever had before. A steady push of Troy's powerful body drove his cock deep inside. With a final grunt, Troy filled him up.

Spencer cursed and panted. It was too much, but it felt so good.

"You're a drug," Troy whispered in his ear breathlessly. "I think I'm addicted."

Troy pulled back slowly and Spencer clawed at the sheets. He rocked back and moaned. His head dropped to the bad as he took it all in one more time. Another slow thrust followed, but Spencer just couldn't wait. He pushed back, eager for more.

"If that's what you want," Troy said and gave it to him.

Now Spencer trembled under the power of his thrusts. He was being hammered and his bed was taking a serious punishment too. The headboard was slamming into the wall. His sheets were ripped off the mattress. Spencer couldn't hang on for much longer either.

His moaning intensified and he was coming. Troy was pounding him right through the most intense orgasm of his life. Then he was coming too and his groans turned into contented sighs as he breathed against Spencer's neck.

They both turned a little as they fell to the bed and Troy wrapped his arms around Spencer.

"Let's just stay like this," Troy murmured into his ear, but Spencer knew he would change his mind as soon as he recovered his senses. Until then, Spencer enjoyed the feel of Troy wrapped around him.

"You're like... a door to heaven," Troy told him after a little while.

For a moment Spencer was speechless. "You weren't bad yourself," he finally said.

"I'll do even better next time," Troy said and kissed his shoulder.

That's when Spencer noticed the state of his sheets. "You made me mess up my sheets," he complained.

"You had nothing to do with that?" Troy said pointing to the stain Spencer had made.

"You'll be helping me get these sheets off so I can wash them," Spencer told him though he wouldn't be ready to get up any time soon.

"More laundry?" Troy groused.

"You have no right to complain. We already established it was your fault."

Troy looked like he was going to deny it so Spencer kissed him. He really didn't need much of an excuse.

They were half on top of each other on the narrow bed when Spencer heard raindrops hitting the window. He looked up and saw rivulets running down the windowpane. In the distance he could see lightning flash. The sound of thunder was faint and far away.

Troy already had one leg over him and an arm over his chest, but he still pulled him closer. "Sorry, I'm crushing you," he said, but Spencer didn't mind. Troy felt good to him. Being held through a rainstorm made him feel warm and drowsy.

They snoozed through lunchtime on a lazy Saturday with rain falling nonstop. Afterward they ordered some Chinese food. While they were waiting, Troy went to his room to get his phone.

As he loitered in the doorway of Troy's bedroom, Spencer noticed the sketches he hung up on the day he moved in.

"You promised to tell me about those, you liar," Spencer scolded him.

At first Troy didn't know what he was talking about. "Oh, those. A guy at my old college gave them to me as a parting gift at the end of the term. I didn't know him that well, but he heard that I came out. He told me they were my ideal man," Troy explained.

Spencer went over to take a closer look. He tilted his head this way and that, then said the obvious, "Your ideal man is very sketchy."

Troy laughed. "He said that I had to figure out the rest, fill in the blanks."

"After sampling a couple of dozen guys," Spencer said.

"Or more," Troy threw in.

Spencer laughed, but inside he was dying to keep Troy all to himself. He knew that wasn't going to happen. He could see how eager Troy was to get out there and experience the sweet gay life he had missed out on.

When the food arrived, they sat on the couch, stole food from each other's plates and otherwise goofed off. Greg didn't want any. He and Joao were meeting some friends so he disappeared to get ready. Then it was almost like Spencer and Troy had the place to themselves.

It made Spencer daydream about what it would be like if it was only him and Troy. No, that would be no good. Without Greg, it would be too easy for Spencer to get confused, to mistake what they had for a relationship instead of an arrangement.

Their arrangement was simple. It should be easy enough for Spencer's stupid brain to understand. But his brain wasn't the problem. Troy made his heart ache and beat like crazy. His heart was an idiot.

Chapter 17

Once again Troy came home from work and found himself alone until night fell. He didn't know Spencer would be out. He shouldn't have been surprised though. Spencer had plenty of friends and he didn't need to inform Troy where he was spending his time.

Troy wasn't supposed to care this much anyway. That's why he didn't text Spencer to find out if or when he was coming home. That was something a boyfriend might do.

As he wandered around the empty apartment, Troy poked his head into Spencer's bedroom then took a step inside. He saw Spencer's t-shirt thrown over his chair and he put his hand on it, imagining he was touching Spencer. Closing his eyes he lost himself in the feeling. He went over and sat on his bed. Lying down, he placed his head on Spencer's beloved pillow and inhaled his scent.

Realizing what he was doing was stupid, Troy went to his own bedroom. With his head on his own pillow, he looked at the sketches he and Spencer had been talking about only a few days before. His ideal man was just a few lines. He could easily be Spencer, but it might be anyone else too. Troy wasn't looking for that guy yet. That would come later when he was ready for relationships and love and all that.

Troy wasn't desperate for a relationship any time soon, only the things that went with it like sharing everything, texting all the time, knowing he would see his guy at the end of every day and every single morning. He hated not knowing if Spencer was coming home tonight.

Hearing the front door, he jumped out of bed and rushed out. It was only Greg. Troy failed completely when it came to hiding his disappointment. Greg gave him a look of scorn.

"Do you and Spencer have any idea what in hell you're doing?" Greg asked him as he plugged in his phone to charge.

"Kind of," Troy said. That was as good as a no to Greg.

"You two are turning into a tangled fucking mess. One of you needs to straighten the mess out."

"I don't think it's a mess," Troy said. His tone was still as unconvincing as before.

"You're a very confused boy, aren't you?"

"Yes. I'm new at this..."

Greg cut him off. "This goes beyond being a newbie."

"Just call me stupid."

"If you insist. You stupid idiot!" Greg snapped at him.

Even though he asked for it, Troy was a little startled. "I'll figure it out. Eventually."

"At whose expense?" Greg asked sharply.

"I wouldn't do anything to hurt Spencer," Troy declared.

"You already are," Greg said exasperated then he rolled his eyes. "I have the worst taste in roommates."

As he retreated to his bedroom, Troy knew that Greg was more than a roommate or a landlord to Spencer. He was a friend. A good friend based on the talking to he just gave Troy. He wondered what that was like.

Troy didn't really miss his friends from back home. They didn't exactly have his back. Some of them had been weirded out that he was gay "all of a sudden." Troy tried to explain that he had been gay all along, but he only got more strange looks. His best friend claimed he was mad at him for not being honest, for pretending to be straight.

"I don't even know who you are, man," Brad said when he walked away from him.

Troy was sure it was just an excuse so he didn't have to be friends with a gay guy. Good riddance. Maybe he hadn't been honest with his friends or with himself, but it shouldn't have been a big deal to them who he slept with. He could understand his ex girlfriends being mad. At least that made some kind of sense.

What Greg said made sense too. Troy needed to stop waiting for Spencer to come home. He needed to get out. This was a perfect opportunity to hook up with someone else for once.

Troy was always too conscious of Spencer by his side to pick up anyone when they went out together. Without him there, it should be no problem. He would go to Fenders. Spencer told him he didn't like that place so there was hardly any chance of running into him there. Troy was a free man and tonight he was going to experience what that meant.

The lights at Fenders seemed harsh to Troy, the music painfully loud. He just needed to get used to the place. A drink or two should help. The crowd around the bar was thick, but Troy got his hands on a beer eventually. His eyes roamed the dancing bodies and the inquisitive eyes that stared back at him.

Even among so many people, Troy felt weirdly alone. Going out without Spencer was kind of a bummer. He missed the bump of his shoulder, feeling him move to the music, hearing him speak directly in his ear so he could hear over the noise. Later on, when he was ready to give up and leave the place, Troy knew he would miss going home with him through dark streets, hearing him laugh too loud in the quiet of the night.

As he was trying to make himself stay a little longer so he wouldn't feel like a total loser, Troy noticed that a guy was watching him very intently. His hair was longish, dark blond matching his stubble. He had a great body and moved like he knew it.

After he was sure he had Troy's full attention, the guy came over to lean next to him. He would turn to look meaningfully at Troy now and then. Every

time he did, Troy admired his perfect face and body. He reminded him of that male model looking guy he had rejected once upon a time.

Maybe that had been a mistake, but he wouldn't repeat it tonight. This guy was interested, and Troy would be an idiot not to do something with him. Even if they just messed around a little, it would be a step forward. He would be free from his dependence on Spencer.

This guy was making it easy, doing most of the work for him. The blond guy spoke into his ear and asked him to go in the back with him. Troy felt the guy's hand trace the line of his zipper. A little startled, Troy watched the blond guy bite his lower lip then lick it while giving Troy a smoldering look. He was hot and he was eager. It was a no-brainer. Then why the fuck was Troy shaking his head and walking away?

Troy walked home, questioning himself the whole way. If that guy didn't do it for him, there were plenty of other guys there. Why did he have to run like that? It was almost like he felt guilty. But he wasn't doing anything wrong.

This thing with Spencer had him all mixed up. Lines were getting blurry. Being with him so much was messing with his head. It was too much like a real relationship, and he felt like a cheater if he even looked at other guys. He couldn't get his head in the game while he felt tied to Spencer.

They were not a couple. He shouldn't be paralyzed by guilt. But if his heart told him he was about to cheat, he couldn't deny it and he couldn't go through with it. Greg was right about him. Troy was an idiot who didn't know what the fuck he was doing.

The answer was obvious even to him. Troy clenched his jaw and cursed. It wasn't the end of the world. No one was in love. They were just a little too close. Things wouldn't have to change that much. They lived together. It wasn't like he wasn't going to be seeing Spencer all the time. There was no reason for Troy to feel like his feet were too heavy to take another step.

Chapter 18

Spencer was back. As he came home, Troy smiled on seeing him. With his legs over the armrest, Spencer was lying on the couch. He had his laptop balanced on his stomach and a phone to his ear. He smiled at Troy too, and that was enough for him to forget his stupid decision. It would be much better to drag Spencer off to his room.

Right now Spencer was busy talking someone through some kind of computer problem. Lucky for Troy or his resolve would crumble. He wished he wasn't into Spencer so much. Then he could let him go easily and move on to other guys.

To entice his imagination away from Spencer, he tried to picture some perfect guy he could be screwing. His mind just kept going back to the guy right in front of him. A perfect guy just couldn't compare to the way Spencer's dark eyes turned even darker when he looked at Troy, or the way he licked peanut butter off a spoon.

Turning away from Spencer's legs dangling over the arm of the couch, Troy went to his room alone. He was an idiot. If he didn't do it now, he would lose his nerve and leave it until it was too late. Even if Troy didn't want it that way, things between them were just too serious, too close for him to go fucking around as long as Spencer was there waiting for him with open arms. He had to end it now.

Troy heard Spencer getting up, snapping his laptop closed and taking it to his own room. This was it. Following him into his bedroom, Troy shut the door. Silent for a moment, he tried to think of the right thing to say. Then he blurted out, "I'm ready to move on to other guys now. It's time. I already have my eye on someone." That last part was a lie. Maybe all of it was.

Spencer sat down on his bed and stared at Troy with a blank look on his face. "What if we're meant for each other?" he asked in a whisper that could barely be heard even in the quiet room.

Troy closed his eyes. The sight of Spencer was so painful to him right now. He answered in a whisper of his own. "If you're the one for me, then I met you too soon. I can't get serious now. I haven't done anything. There are so many guys out there. I can't settle. I can't."

Troy just wanted this horrible moment to end. He wanted to run from Spencer's hushed, broken voice and from the blank expression that masked Spencer's real face. He didn't want to hear what came next. He wanted to put his fingers in his ears and run out of the room like a five-year-old. But he was rooted to the spot.

Spencer stood up and took a step toward Troy. His voice turned harsh as he said, "You're right. It was a mistake to start this."

"That's not what I said," Troy said but Spencer dismissed his interruption.

"It's my fault. You fell into bed with me because I was there throwing

myself at you."

"No. I did it because I like you, and that's the reason we need to stop this," Troy said, desperate to explain.

"Sure. Makes perfect sense. You're dumping me because you like me so much."

"Are you going to tell me that you would be OK if I slept with someone else?" Troy said to make himself clear.

Spencer didn't answer so Troy kept talking. "I'm not OK with it either. I know I'm not cheating on you because we aren't together like that, but some stupid part of my brain doesn't know it. Something inside me won't let me be with other guys as long as I'm with you. So I'm ending this for both our sakes."

"Remind me to thank you later," Spencer said bitterly.

"I do care about you and I'm sorry." It wasn't exactly what he wanted to say, but it got the job done. Spencer walked past him and opened the bedroom door to show him out. As he left, the hurt, angry look in his eyes told Troy that they were over for good.

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Spencer slammed the door then stared at it dumbly. It was like he expected Troy to walk in again and take back what he said. Even now, Spencer didn't want to take it in. The terrible pain building in his heart echoed Troy's words. He was helpless to stop their flow. Every word slammed into his chest and slashed his heart to pieces. It was over.

Troy was ready to move on to hotter guys, guys in his league. Spencer knew this was coming. Of course he did. He had known Troy wasn't ready for a relationship. Then why was he standing there in shock, feeling empty and alone? Why was he in agony?

The stab of pain was so much worse than he expected. Then the sharp pain turned into a deep ache that filled his chest. It welled up and threatened to make him cry. Spencer shook his head, telling himself, "No, no, no. You were stupid. You got yourself into this. You will not cry about it."

Chapter 19

Day after day, Spencer was relieved to go to work and dreaded leaving at the end of the day. He didn't want to go anywhere. At the apartment building, the gray hallway greeted him as he went up the stairs. He hated coming home since Troy ended things. There wasn't much he liked these days.

Even his bed didn't look inviting to him any more. It was too big for him all of a sudden. Only a handful of nights sleeping with Troy, but he could still feel the weight of Troy's arm flung over him as he fell asleep. He could smell his skin and hear the rumble of his voice in his ear. Just a taste of having Troy's big body next to him, or even better wrapped around him, ruined his good night's sleep.

Spencer sat on the edge of the bed and looked for anything in his room that didn't remind him of Troy. He wasn't sure there was anything in the world that wouldn't make him think of Troy. He couldn't get away from him, but the real Troy hadn't spent much time in the apartment recently.

Whenever Spencer saw him, he felt so much pain that he couldn't even manage to be civil, just walked past him after a curt hi. The fact was he had nothing to say to him, or was it that he had too much to say and he was afraid that he would blurt it all out, sobbing and cursing at Troy, and generally humiliating himself. It was better to avoid him than risk a scene like that.

Spencer had never been good at letting go or knowing when not to get attached. But this was the worst. He didn't just get a little too attached to Troy, he loved him with his whole stupid, broken heart.

There was no neutral spot in the apartment, but Spencer went to lie down on the couch where he and Troy made out but never actually had sex at least. His stomach felt empty but he couldn't be bothered to eat. Sitting in a stupor, he was willing his eyes to stop stinging with tears. He wouldn't cry.

His chest might feel like it was on fire with repressed sobs, his teeth might be clenched so tight to hold back anguished sounds, and his eyes squeezed tight to hold back tears, but he wasn't crying. He nearly doubled over shaking from the pain, but Spencer refused to cry even if it might have made him feel better. He would just let the pain inside him build and build until it crushed him.

As he blinked to clear his eyes of tears without shedding a single one, he heard footsteps outside the front door and listened. Either they would be heavy or sharp, Troy or Greg. At first he only heard the door open and close, and he held his breath.

"And there you are," Greg said seeing him moping. It wasn't a new thing and he was probably sick of it.

"Next time I do this to myself, promise to slap some sense into me," Spencer told him.

"There better not be a next time or I will." Greg flexed his long fingers and

cracked his knuckles to let him know he was serious. Reaching into a shopping bag, he brought out a bottle of red wine. He got two glasses from the kitchen and sat with Spencer on the couch.

"That's not for me, is it? I hate wine," Spencer told him peevishly.

"OK, then how would you like to drown your sorrows? Beer?" Greg asked him.

"No. Beer would remind me of Troy." Spencer slouched then turned to look at Greg. "How long did it hurt when you broke up with the guy before Joao?" This feeling had to pass eventually. It had to. His heart hurt as well as his head. He felt like his brain was full of unshed tears. He needed some words of hope form Greg.

"I don't know," Greg said as he poured the wine. "I wasn't a hundred percent until Joao came along."

"Then there's no hope for me."

"Drink this," Greg said and forced a glass of wine into his hand.

Spencer took a sip and grimaced. "You don't have to sit with me," he told Greg.

"I hear misery loves company," Greg told him and clinked his glass against Spencer's.

"Not this misery. You have a boyfriend. Go have fun with him."

Greg ignored his suggestion and sighed. "I told you to be careful," Greg said then he hugged him and told him he was an idiot. The hug was nice and the idiot thing was only the truth. "You want me to kick him out?" Greg asked surprising Spencer with his show of loyalty. Sometimes Spencer forgot that Greg was a pretty nice guy under all that scolding.

"No. I just need to hurry up and get over it." Spencer lowered his head. He wished he could calm down and pretend to be fine. "I'm just dreading seeing him with someone else," he admitted under his breath.

"That was bound to happen, and it's better now than if it happened while the two of you were doing your thing. Would you ever be OK with letting him fuck around?"

There was that question again. When Troy asked, Spencer couldn't answer. He would either have to lie or admit how he really felt. He wasn't about to do that in the middle of Troy breaking up with him.

Drinking a few glasses of wine only made his head worse so Spencer put Greg out of his misery and went to his room. When he went to bed, the sleepless hours stretched on like the night would never end. And worse than that, Spencer was way too aware of the fact that Troy wasn't home. He really didn't want to know why.

A horrible thought occurred to him,. What if Troy brought someone home with him. Spencer sat up straight. Turning his head toward Troy's bedroom, he realized how bad it would be. He would be able to hear them through the wall. The muffled sounds of sex, the familiar sounds of Troy being satisfied

would be unmistakable to Spencer after hearing them from close up.

Spencer got out of bed and got dressed hurriedly. He had to get out of there. In his rush, he put on two different shoes. He considered leaving like that, but calmed down enough to dress himself properly. After all he might run into Troy and some guy right on the stairs. He couldn't let Troy see what a mess he was.

Knowing he would be seeing him all the time, Spencer wished he could keep things friendly between them. He really did like Troy as a person but the way he hurt inside was too sharp. Maybe when the pain died down, he could face being friends with him. For now he just wanted to lock up his feelings and throw away the key.

Spencer should have gone to see one of his friends, but he didn't want to be a downer or worse, have to pretend to be fine. Instead, he walked aimlessly while his head pounded.

He wondered how long he would keep walking just to avoid seeing Troy. One dark street was looking like every other. He felt like he might lose his way even in this familiar town. That was an idea. He could just keep going until he got lost then he would never have to face Troy again.

And it was the weekend. It was going to be a long one. Spencer didn't know what he would do with himself. For now he needed to head for home and get himself into bed. To hell with Troy and who he might have brought home. Spencer was dead tired.

When he got home, he grabbed a bottle of water and sat down on the couch. He only meant to get off his feet for a minute. But after all these sleepless nights, his eyes closed on their own and he was fast asleep before he knew it.

Spencer's eyes snapped open. Raising his head and looking around, he realized that the noise that woke him was Troy getting a bowl and a box of cereal. For a moment, Spencer was disoriented. His confusion didn't last. He remembered that he had fallen asleep on the couch and that the days when he was happy to be woken up by Troy were over.

"Did you want some?" Troy asked holding up a box of Cheerios.

Spencer only shook his head.

"It looks like you passed out here," Troy said noticing that Spencer was dressed and still wearing his shoes. Troy didn't sound like he was implying anything, but Spencer wasn't sure. He shrugged not wanting to admit that Troy was the reason he exhausted himself last night and then fell asleep in the middle of the living room.

Having recovered from the shock of seeing Troy, Spencer felt the pain he had been carrying around spread through him. Mornings were like that for him even when he didn't have to face Troy as soon as his eyes were open. On other mornings, Troy was only a dream he would wake up from then slowly

remember that reality was very different.

Troy came out of the kitchen with his cereal bowl. He looked uncomfortable. Neither one of them spoke. The silence hung between them heavy and thick. Spencer couldn't take it any more. He got up and walked past Troy without a word.

He went into the kitchen and started the coffeemaker. It was just something to do so he wouldn't have to look at Troy. It was better than running away to his room.

"I haven't seen much of you," Troy said. He wore his best sunny smile.

For Spencer, hearing his cheerful voice was agony. "That was the idea, wasn't it?" Spencer stepped out of the kitchen wishing he could match him smile for smile, but pain jabbed at him at every reminder of how things used to be.

Troy's smile died as soon as he saw how Spencer looked at him. "Have you been avoiding me?"

"Oh, no. I love being reminded of how worthless I am and that any random guy is better," Spencer said bitterly.

"Hey! I never said that," Troy protested.

"It was in the subtext."

Troy was quiet for a minute then he admitted the truth. "Sorry. I guess I've been avoiding you too. I didn't know it would be so hard seeing you."

"Sorry to bring you down." Spencer couldn't help getting angry. He turned away.

"I just don't know how to deal with this," Troy said in a hushed voice.

"Nothing to deal with," Spencer said dismissively and walked past him to his room.

Just before he slammed his bedroom door, Spencer heard Troy say his name. The sound of it reached right through him. This was why he couldn't be around him. Spencer was weak and Troy was strong. He could crush his heart with his bare hands, but he had done it all over again just by saying his name.

Chapter 20

Troy didn't spend much time at the apartment. When he wasn't at work, he did a lot of extra running. He saw every movie that was playing and some of them twice. Once he even went out with some people from work.

That evening at a bar only reminded him of being out with Spencer. Why did it have to hurt so much to let go of him? His heart was aching all the time. It didn't make any sense. They were never really together.

Every time he saw Spencer and the pain written on his face, he had to wonder if that was really true. That morning he had seen it again. Spencer was so raw and on edge around him, and Troy didn't know how to make things better.

After Spencer got mad, Troy was going to leave the apartment, but Spencer beat him to it. At least he had friends he could hang out with. Not that Troy was feeling sorry for himself. He was fine.

He played BioShock in his room. That took him back. The game was an old favorite. Plenty of times he had used it as a way to escape from his parents and himself. Today he just couldn't focus on it and he died more than usual.

Then for some reason he shuddered as pain washed through him. His eyes were filling with tears that dripped down his face as he blinked. What was he crying for? Spencer was just a fuck buddy. Troy was shuddering with sobs and fighting the urge to go find Spencer wherever he was, throw himself into his arms and beg his forgiveness.

That's when he heard the front door and he jumped. Hurriedly he wiped his eyes. As the apartment outside his bedroom door grew very still so did Troy. In the silence he told himself that it might not be Spencer out there. And anyway, what did it matter? He had done the right thing when he ended it, but he felt so heavy that he could barely move.

He couldn't stay where he was. He was driving himself crazy. Before stepping out of his room, Troy checked to make sure his eyes weren't red from crying. He was the one who ended it. He had no right to cry. When he came out, he saw that it was only Greg sitting in the living room.

Greg wasn't very understanding. Every time he saw him, he gave Troy the stink eye. Saying hi to him anyway, Troy left the apartment. If he went for a run, it might help to clear his head.

Running and not seeing Spencer all day did the trick. That night, Troy was ready to party. He was going to take full advantage of being young and gay and not get stuck on one guy who just happened to sleep in the room next to his. It was just lazy not to expand his horizons.

It didn't matter that Troy's heart beat hard and fast for Spencer like it did for no one else. Once he had a taste of a few other guys, he would get over that.

Troy was trying his luck at Fenders again. Who knows, he might find that guy who had tempted him before. Now he was free to accept his invitation. As Troy dragged his feet going toward the bar, he was hoping not to see that guy. Maybe it was too soon to deal with someone aggressive like that. He should look for someone more low key.

He stared around but every guy he saw made him think of Spencer. The sad look in Spencer's eyes haunted him. He could still feel the burning touch of his lips, their last kiss. The thought threatened to have Troy crying like a baby again. That couldn't be the last time he kissed Spencer. It just couldn't.

Troy took a few deep breaths. He had to get a grip. This was why he needed experience. He didn't know how to manage his feelings and put things in perspective. But he would learn how to let go of a guy who made him feel so good with the merest brush of his fingertips over his arm or his smiling mouth grazing his earlobe just before he whispered his name. His skin would forget the heat of his body and the pressure of his touch. Troy had learned too much from him, all the wrong things he now had to unlearn with other guys.

Troy wondered how long it would be before he felt like himself again. Waiting for it to happen on its own was stupid. He had to push through this. It was the choice he made. Now he needed to make it count, put his freedom to good use.

With a drink in hand, Troy eyed the crowd. He wanted more sex, he wanted all the sex he could have, but he couldn't get excited about doing it with any of the guys there. Plenty of them were good-looking but they left him cold. He could get them on their knees, bend them over or fuck them against a wall, whatever, but he only wanted to see Spencer in those positions. He wanted to see him in all the positions. He was still obsessed with him.

Troy took a hard look around him. Guys like these were just what he needed, not a guy he couldn't forget like Spencer. Rather than approach anyone, Troy decided to wait and see if anyone would hit on him. Then all he would have to do was say yes and go with the flow. Easy.

After a little while, one guy caught his eye then motioned with his head. As he left, Troy followed him.

The guy was nothing like Spencer. He was muscular with a crew cut and reminded Troy of a guy on his high school football team he had a crush on. That was a bonus.

The guy led him to a dim space in the back where a few couples stood pressed against each other. This wasn't the kind of place where they would get up to anything heavy and that was fine by him. The guy picked a spot and stopped. He ran his hands down Troy's front then leaned in for a kiss. Troy drew back.

"Sorry," he said feeling like an idiot. But he didn't want to kiss this guy. "I had some garlic earlier. Could we just skip to umm..."

"Sure thing," he said with a shrug and Troy was relieved.

He really needed to get it together. This was what he wanted. He just had to get Spencer and his hot, luscious mouth out of his head and focus on this guy who was hotter, better built and not Spencer. The muscled jock kneeled in front of him and started to unzip his fly.

No way. He couldn't let him do that. What excuse was Troy going to make now? He didn't make any. His jaw was clamped too tight as he stepped away and shook his head. As the guy made a disgusted face and stood up, Troy got out of there.

Troy pushed his way through the crowd and to the bar. A few more drinks would fix this. Then Troy would stop comparing every guy to Spencer. If Spencer was there, he wouldn't be the best looking guy in the club. It didn't matter though. Somehow Spencer always won the competition.

No other guy could measure up to Spencer's crazy laugh, the sound of his voice when he was close to coming, the way he looked when he was sleepy and that murderous look he got if Troy woke him up which melted away as soon as he kissed him. No other eyes, no matter how pretty, were Spencer's eyes, which went from serious to laughing so fast and drew Troy in like he was falling into an abyss.

Fuck. What kind of spell did Spencer put him under? Why couldn't he break free of him? Everywhere he turned there were gorgeous guys and all he could think about was Spencer, Spencer's hands caressing him gently or gripping him hard as they fucked, his lips soft and plump on his own or wrapped tightly around his cock.

What the hell was he doing? Troy was searching through a nightclub full of guys for the one guy who wasn't there. He was sure he would cheat on Spencer so why couldn't he go through with it now that he was free. Troy might be free but he wasn't acting like it. He was just wasting his time here.

Making his way home, Troy passed the Bottleneck and thought about going in. That would be a dumb move. As he wondered if Spencer might be there, the sign glowed more like a warning than an invitation.

Troy looked at the doors just as a group of friends spilled out into the street. They must have been very drunk the way they leaned on each other and laughed. Troy smiled at their happy stumble down the street. One of them broke into an incomprehensible song and the others jeered him then they all laughed.

Troy kept looking after them. He recognized the feeling they shared. That was him and Spencer on their first night out. It was the messy happiness of two drunks sharing the same good feeling as they headed home. A stab of searing pain went through Troy as he thought about never being with Spencer and never feeling that way again.

He felt like he was at war with his own heart. Troy wanted to be out there but his heart only wanted to beat for Spencer and now it raged inside him and made him hurt. His heart was like some kind of monster that wouldn't be

denied.

It was telling him that the rock hard ache of his cock was only for Spencer. It was crazy to think that he could go around looking for action and still refuse a blowjob from a hot guy because he wasn't Spencer. Fuck. Spencer didn't own his dick.

Chapter 21

Spencer lost track of how long he stood under the shower. Long enough for the water to go cold and numb him. He finally got out and dried off with his back to the mirror. He didn't want to look at himself in the mirror and see that guy that Troy didn't want staring back at him accusingly, reminding him how little he was worth.

Troy was out tonight and Spencer didn't think he would be back any time soon. Greg was out for the night too. Wrapping the towel around him, Spencer walked out of the bathroom. He pulled the towel off his hips as soon as he stepped into his room and closed the door. Then he froze.

Troy was in his bedroom, sitting on his bed. He got up and, for a moment, just stood there. Spencer was ready to kick him out, but the words just wouldn't come. Other words overtook them, but they couldn't be said either. They were too desperate and pathetic and full of idiotic hope.

Spencer stood there mute, holding back words and feelings until they almost choked him. Troy stared at him, the front of his jeans tenting dangerously. Spencer cursed and moved to cover himself up.

"Don't," Troy said. He came toward Spencer and grabbed his hand so he couldn't put the towel back around himself.

Spencer felt even more naked with Troy fully dressed, his eyes burning into him.

"I need you," Troy said in a deep, husky voice. His bulging crotch already told Spencer that.

Who was he to deny a man in need? He was too weak willed for that. So what if Troy knew he was a mess and that he had no pride? It was only the truth.

With his hands on Spencer's ass, Troy dragged him over to the bed. As he laid Spencer on his back, he unzipped his fly. His other hand rummaged in Spencer's nightstand. While Troy got him ready, Spencer glared at him.

"You want this?" Troy said. It was a question and also a demand for Spencer to say yes.

Spencer said nothing. He grabbed Troy's cock and unrolled a condom over it. Troy's eyes fell closed and he nodded. He got his answer.

Pushing Spencer's legs up, Troy let them rest on his shoulders. Spencer breathed and tried not to get caught up in the feeling. But as soon as the head of Troy's cock touched him, he was moaning, his whole body tense with desire.

He accepted Spencer into his body, hell he welcomed every familiar thick, rock hard inch. God, he missed him. He missed the feeling of Troy filling him up, not holding back, giving it to him just a little too hard and too fast. Spencer was getting that scary rush of being taken with passion and need.

Hitting him deep, Troy drove his cock hard into him, giving him no relief, no chance to adjust or breathe. All he could do was take it and damn if it

wasn't hot, so hard, so good and wild. Troy had him sweating and flushed, getting more worked up with every stroke of his cock inside him.

Troy moved in and out with a grunt at each thrust. Spencer's insides burned, building toward more and more pleasure and some pain as well. As Troy pushed in harder and faster, Spencer's head rolled back and his fingers reached under Troy's t-shirt and raked his chest, his back, his ass, anywhere he could reach, seeking relief.

Spencer reached for his own cock, but Troy restrained both his hands over his head. With both his wrists in Troy's hard grip, high above his head, Spencer felt stretched out, pulled tight like he might snap. He was an incoherent blubbering mess. He wouldn't last. His senses were in overdrive.

His moans and incoherent words mixed with the sound of their bodies pounding together and the bed shaking under them, the headboard thumping against the wall. His cries got louder. The bed was close to breaking and so was Spencer.

Troy was driving himself inside him harder than he ever had but Spencer's moans and garbled curses urged him to pump harder. He couldn't get enough even as Troy was fucking him so fast and hard that Spencer's body arched up right off the bed. Troy still kept fucking, not missing a beat. Pleasure shot through Spencer's body with shocking intensity sending him into the sweet oblivion of release.

As Spencer shot his load over both of them, Troy kept pumping until he was spent. Panting and moaning, Spencer felt like his world was spinning. Troy slumped into his arms, still groaning, familiar, heavy. He didn't stay like that for long and Spencer expected him to get up. But all Troy did was stare down at him like he wanted to fuck him again in the very next second.

Troy ran his hands through his hair, his fingers getting lost in it as Spencer looked up at him. His touch felt so good. It made Spencer crazy and confused.

"You're amazing," Troy said and broke the spell.

Suddenly, Spencer got up and he was out of bed before Troy could stop him.

"Glad to be of service," Spencer said as he stood on shaking legs. Being with Troy again was crazy intense, but it was meaningless too. He wanted to slap himself so he wouldn't forget that.

"I'm sorry I..." Troy started to say.

"Shut up." He couldn't listen to this. He was ready to run from his own room naked if that's what it took.

Spencer turned away. He wiped himself off with the towel still damp from his shower and looked for the clothes he planned to change into. That's when Troy grabbed him from behind and kissed his neck. The clothes in Spencer's hands fell to the floor.

"Sorry, I couldn't wait. I missed you so much I couldn't stop thinking about you."

Spencer gulped. "Troy?" he said, feeling so confused.

Troy didn't explain. He turned him around so he could kiss his mouth. As

Troy was running his hands all over him, Spencer tried to push him away, but Troy was kissing him everywhere, murmuring his name, confusing him even more.

"What the hell is this?" Spencer panted.

Troy stopped and looked into his eyes then down his body. "I can't talk like this." Picking up the clothes Spencer had dropped, Troy shoved them in his hands. "Make yourself decent before I jump you again."

As he watched Spencer bend over to slip his boxers on, Troy looked like he was tempted to make that threat a reality. Troy's gaze fell on him unflinching and hard. His eyes had never looked at Spencer like that. Then Troy shot him a warning look, and Spencer finished dressing while stealing questioning glances at him. What was going on?

With Spencer decent, the two of them stood face to face. Spencer frowned and waited, steeling himself for what Troy wanted to say.

"This is more than I ever felt before. Just now we were as close as two people can get. You're the one. I can't be with anyone else. You're my one."

Spencer only blinked at him for a while. "You didn't feel that way a few days ago," he reminded Troy.

"I was lying to myself. I have a lot of practice. But I think I love you."

"You think?" Spencer tried to turn away but Troy grabbed his shoulders and wouldn't let him. The intensity of his stare caught Spencer off guard. He didn't realize Troy could look like that. It was damn sexy, but Spencer couldn't help glaring at him.

"Don't look at me like that. I never said I was smart," Troy said and clutched at Spencer like he was afraid he would run away.

"Oh, I know you aren't. But did your brain fall out? If you love someone, you stick with them, you don't go chasing other tail just for the hell of it."

"I know that now. I told you I had a lot to learn."

"Idiot."

"You are being kind of mean to a guy who loves you," Troy said and tried to kiss him.

Spencer didn't let him. "I was miserable thinking you didn't care about me and that you were out there doing tons of other guys."

"I was out there, but all I did was mope and obsess about you."

"And you didn't know where to find me?" Spencer said pointedly.

"Can you forgive me? I love you so much." As Troy said that, Spencer felt like he would fall apart worse than when he thought he lost him.

"You're so stupid," Spencer said while wiping the tears that started flowing. Now he was crying. Great.

Troy took him in his arms. "But I'm all yours now. So what are you going to do with me?"

"Make you forget all the anonymous, meaningless sex you never got to have." Spencer breathed in Troy's familiar scent both musky and clean as he

was held in his tight embrace.

"I'm up for that. And I'll do anything to prove myself to you."

"Just be mine," Spencer demanded.

"I'm yours. Since I met you, I've been yours. I don't want anyone else. I just wish I figured it out before I hurt you."

Spencer was still teary eyed, but he was so happy as he threw his arms around Troy's neck. He felt like celebrating, like shooting off fireworks, so he let Troy kiss him until he couldn't breathe.

For a while, they stood in silence with Spencer leaning against Troy. But that wasn't enough for Troy. He needed him closer. Troy's muscles hardened as he held him tighter.

"Don't crush me," Spencer warned him though he was enjoying how Troy squeezed him.

"I can crush you a little. You're strong," Troy said.

"Me?" Spencer was dismayed.

"It's true. I get all my strength from you. On my own, I'm so lost. I hated being away from you," Troy told him and kissed his hair.

"This is where I remind you that you broke up with me."

"I had to learn one more lesson before I could come back to you for good. Sorry I was stupid," Troy said. He took Spencer's hand and kissed it.

"As long as you are here with me, you're forgiven," Spencer told him.

They kissed and Troy swung him around back toward the bed.

"You made me get dressed," Spencer complained as Troy pulled his clothes off.

"From now on, you won't need clothes ever again," Troy told him and pushed him down on the bed.

Spencer looked up at him, cupped his face and kissed him. "This is making love."

"Does that mean you going to say you love me?"

"When you make me come, I'll scream it out," Spencer told him and kissed him again.

Their lovemaking was slow this time, no pressure, no rush. Spencer could let himself go. Gentle at first, they couldn't hold back for long. Spencer was insane with love for this man. Even if he hadn't promised, he would have screamed out, "Troy, I love you."

As they were lying together sleepy and exhausted, Spencer still couldn't believe this was real. Troy was kissing him softly now and then as if to remind him that it was.

"Love is the scariest thing I ever felt," Troy whispered in his ear.

"Don't worry. I'll protect you," Spencer told him.

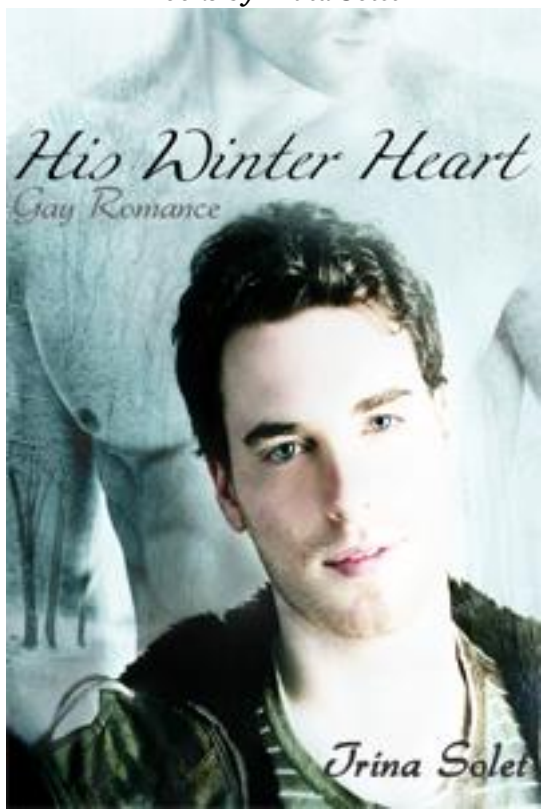
"You're the one I'm scared of. You can demolish me with one look," Troy said and held him tight.

As he felt the strength of his body wrap around him, Spencer couldn't believe what he was hearing. Then he heard something even more amazing. In a gruff voice, Troy demanded, "You have to be mine forever."

Spencer could never deny him. All he could do was say, "Yes."

The End

Books by Trina Solet



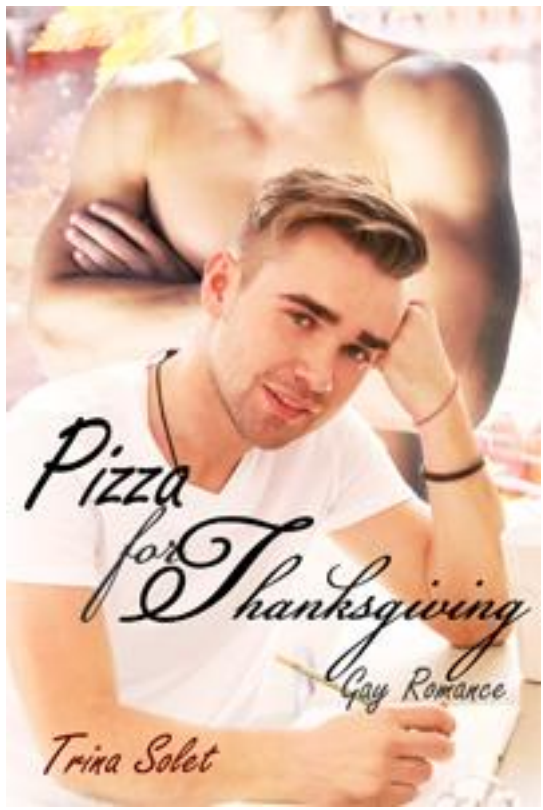
His Winter Heart

Wes is living a lonely, stark existence when he meets Colin, a lively young guy in desperate circumstances. Wes is so taken with him that he has to have him. His decision to invite Colin to spend the night is going to turn his quiet life upside down.

Colin almost finds himself sleeping on the street. When the tall, blond man makes him an offer, he can't say no either to the money or to the man. Colin is impulsive and full of contradictions. He refuses to sell himself for money and ends up homeless because of it. But when Wes offers to pay him for sex, Colin jumps at the chance to go home with him. Something about Wes strikes a chord with Colin. He knows there is a warm heart under the serious, impassive exterior and an awesome body under all the layers of winter clothes.

Things don't go as planned when Wes decides that Colin is too young and inexperienced and refuses to sleep with him. That doesn't mean that he can stay away from someone who shakes up his world.

The more time Colin spends with Wes, the more he wants him. Colin isn't shy about getting what he wants. His relentless pursuit might pay off if Wes doesn't let family complications and his fears about the future keep them apart. Will Wes let go of his inhibitions and allow himself to love the younger man?



Pizza for Thanksgiving

Mack and Enzo are roommates and nothing more. While sharing the same apartment, they live separate lives. Enzo is sweet but painfully shy. Mack is gruff and kind of intimidating. He's had a hard life and doesn't let his guard down easily.

Now Mack is anticipating a lonely Thanksgiving dinner, but Enzo won't let that happen. When he hears that Mack is going to be all alone for Thanksgiving, he gets up the courage to make him an offer. But things don't go as planned in more ways than one.

With the best of intentions, Enzo has woken up something in Mack that he might not be ready for. Can Mack stop hiding and holding back? When Enzo asks for too much from him, can he say yes anyway?

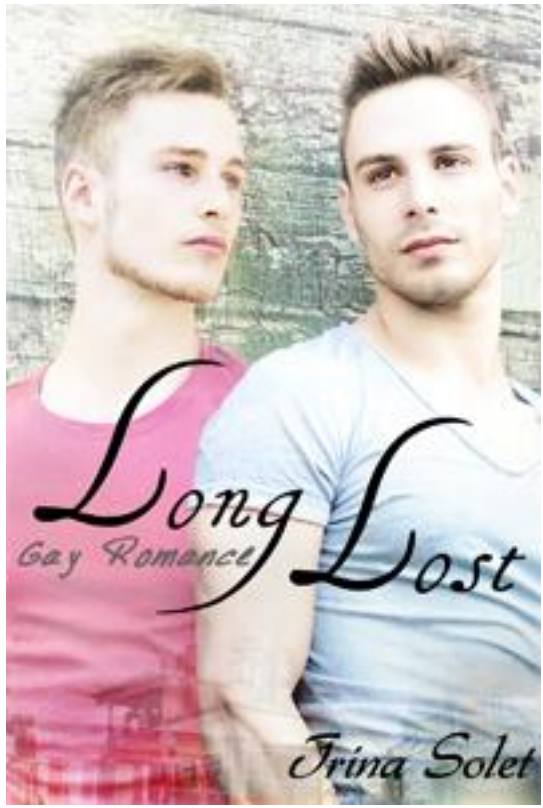
With Eyes Open

Jacob and his son, Toby, have just moved to a small town. Everything is going well so far, except for one thing – who is Toby talking to in the back garden? There's no one there.

Ian is wondering the same thing. He's taking time off from college to be with his dad. One day he sees the little boy acting strangely, and he decides to look into it.

While Ian is trying to solve the mystery of what Toby is seeing, he and Jacob grow closer. Jacob is a man Ian can trust and lean on at a difficult time. Jacob has some reservations about Ian, but his feelings are too strong to be denied. Even as unexplained events surround them, these two can't stay away from each other.

Good thing because when Ian finds the answers he's looking for, he's going to need Jacob more than ever.



Long Lost

Blake Adler is back in town on a mission. Years ago Blake's father cut him out of his life so completely that he never spoke of him. Now that his father has passed away, Blake finally gets to meet his younger brother and sister. But Blake didn't come back to Meadowview for a reunion with his lost family. He's desperate to find the man he can't live without and win back the love he threw away.

Blake and Reese were once best friends. They could have been more, but Blake screwed up the most important relationship of his life. Now he wants to fix things with Reese, if he can only find him.

Blake isn't the only one looking for Reese. No matter how far Reese runs, trouble follows him. Wild and vulnerable, he always had it rough. The one good thing in his life was Blake.

Now Reese is taking a big risk coming back to town. It might be worth it if he can reclaim the man he can't stop thinking about, the one who rejected him, the one he loves more than anyone.

Golden Days

How can a nerdy, young dad hope to attract his hunky new neighbor? And if he can get his attention, does he have any hope of making it last?

Kyle only recently became an adoptive father to a vulnerable little girl. He's a devoted dad, and Viv is a spirited and loving five-year-old. With the help of his little dog, Kyle worked hard to gain Viv's love and trust in record time. Now they are a family. That doesn't mean he has no room for a man in his life.

Luke has been working in a string of nightclubs for most of his adult life. It was an exciting life, but Luke had enough of it. A recent loss sends Luke into suburbia in search of a more peaceful life. The loss of his brother is still fresh, but spending time with Kyle and Viv brings him so much joy.

In the past, Kyle hasn't been lucky in love. He always goes for the wrong kind of guy. But with Viv in his life, he can't afford those kinds of mistakes.

When Luke moves into the neighborhood, Kyle ends up with two wounded souls on his hands. Good thing he has room in his heart for both of them. If Kyle can get past his fears, he might just get everything he has always dreamed of.

Where He Belongs

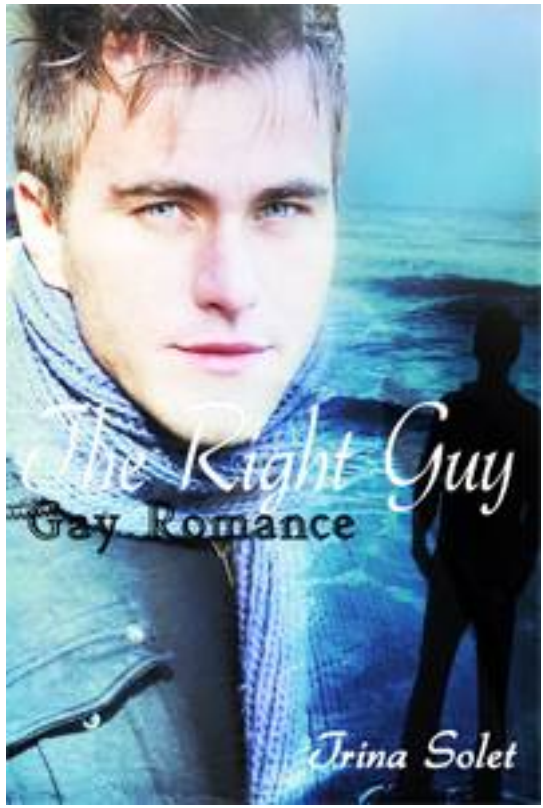
Jack thought he had everything only to end up without a wife, a best friend or a child. Now he is closed off and afraid to love. After despair nearly cost him his life, he can't afford another heartbreak. Burying himself in work, Jack has made business his whole life. Now a business opportunity has led him to Gus, the one man who can break down his defenses.

Gus doesn't know what he is getting himself into when he flirts with his new boss. The uptight younger man is irresistible to him. Is Gus being reckless when he falls for Jack despite all the warning signs? After all, Gus is a happy, single father to a little boy, and Josh is a happy kid.

As he is drawn into their lives, Jack finds that Gus and his little boy are everything he needs and what he is most afraid of. Jack can't risk his heart again, but he might be won over by these two goofballs despite himself.

His True Home

Alec has retreated to his childhood home after a life of too much fun. When a little boy is abandoned on the road leading to Alec's home town of Seaview Pines, Alec is the one who ends up taking care of him. Now Cory is on his way to join them. He was abandoned by his mother as well and wants to give Teddy, his little brother, the family he never had. As they spend time together, it's up to Cory to draw out the serious, silent little boy. He also has to convince Alec that his home town isn't just a temporary refuge. It's where all three of them belong.



The Right Guy

Nathan and Paul never liked each other. Paul was a snob, and Nathan felt like he was always looking down on him. Nathan wasn't interested in him anyway. He had his sights set on Turner. Now that Turner is getting married to another man, Nathan's heart is breaking. That's when he finds that Paul is right there by his side. This gorgeous man is ready to distract him and help him get over his unrequited crush.

After being with Paul, Nathan is finally ready to move on and let go of his hopeless feelings. But after a hot encounter on the beach, Nathan might be giving up his old crush for a new one. Knowing that his longing for Paul is just as hopeless, Nathan is at his wit's end.

But things aren't the way they seem. Paul has been watching Nathan pine after his friend for too long. All that time he has wanted Nathan all to himself. It's hard for Paul to believe that Nathan could ever return his feelings. After all, Nathan doesn't even like him.

He doesn't know that Nathan feels differently about him these days. When spending time with Paul stirs unexpected feelings that are more than lust, Nathan wonders if he misjudged this man. Could Paul be the right man for him? After chasing the wrong guy for so long, Nathan has to prove to Paul that his feelings are real. That won't be easy. Paul isn't the most reasonable guy, and he won't settle for anything less from Nathan than his whole heart.

A Christmas Boyfriend

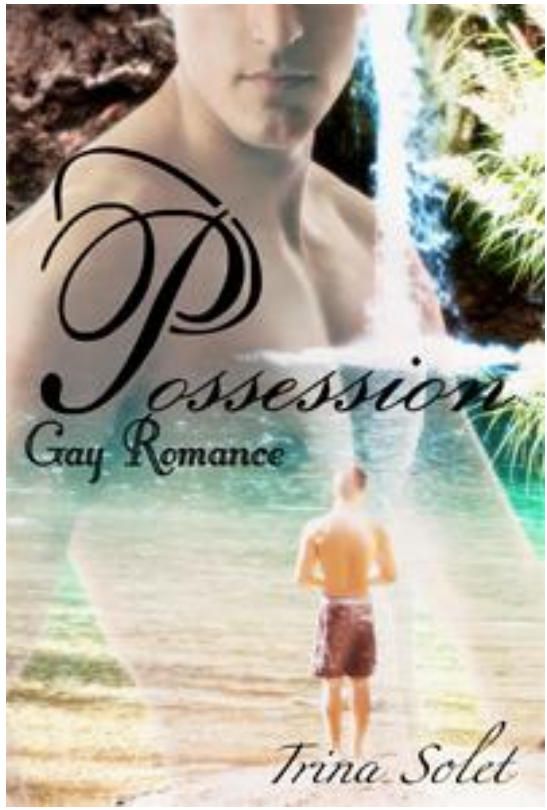
"Can you get me a man for Christmas?"

When he said those fateful words, Ben didn't know what he was setting in motion.

Ben is a busy dad to a four year old little girl. He doesn't have much time for a social life, but he wasn't serious when he asked for a man for Christmas. His daughter, Maya, doesn't know that. She is determined to play Santa and get her dad the gift he asked for.

The man she picks for her dad is her preschool teacher, Jason Kenney. Neither Jason nor Maya think he's the right man to be a present for Ben, so why is he standing there on Christmas Eve with a gift bow in his hair?

Smarting from a recent breakup, Jason isn't looking forward to the holidays. Despite his reservations, Jason gets tangled up with Ben. There is something about Ben that he just can't resist. As their feelings intensify, will spending Christmas together turn into something more?



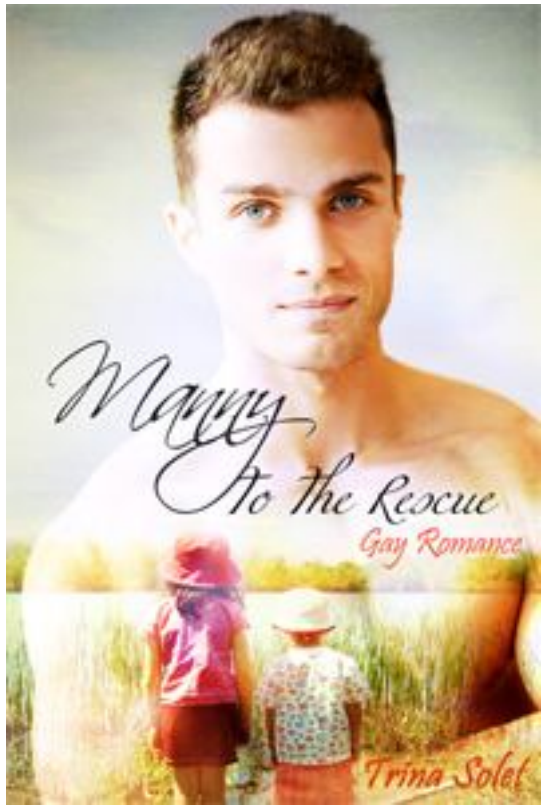
Possession

While looking for solitude, James finds love.

As soon as he arrives at the secluded, tropical villa, James knows he has found the ideal spot. Tranquil and remote, this place is just what he needs to get over a painful breakup. In perfect solitude, James's heart can begin to heal. But what if his solitude isn't so perfect, and Rob is. He is the young man who intrudes on James's privacy and steals his heart.

Rob is too much of a temptation for the cautious and uptight James. Even as he gives in to his desire, James reminds himself that this is just a vacation fling. Then why is the thought of leaving Rob tearing him apart? He can't get enough of the younger man. Once James has his body, he can't live without having his heart.

James thinks his yearning is hopeless. Then a revelation about Rob's circumstances changes everything. Will James have the courage to act on his feelings? He has to. This is his chance to have Rob, to give him the life he deserves and to truly love him.

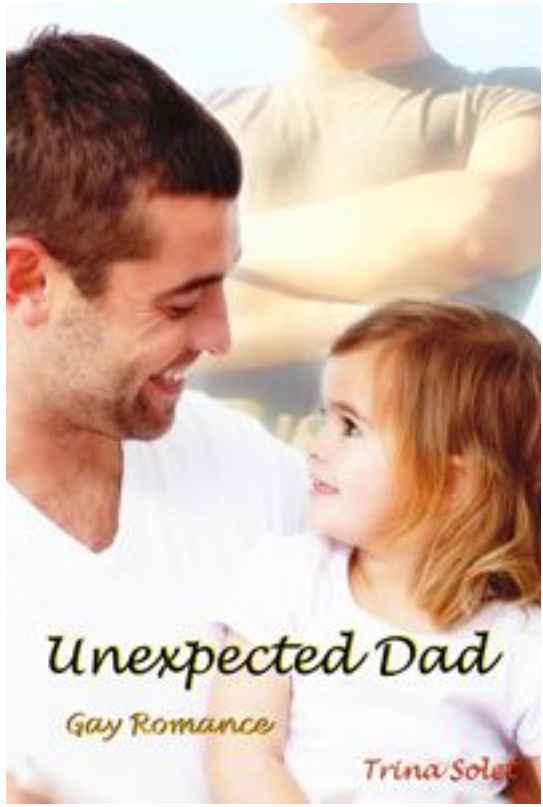


Manny To The Rescue

Why would Owen be terrified of Connie and Maggie, his two adorable little nieces? Because he is about to be left alone with them. Owen thinks he is going to have to take care of his nieces by himself until Dan shows up. If Owen approves, Dan is ready to be the girls' manny. Right from the start, Dan is a big help and an even bigger temptation. And Owen isn't the only one being tempted. When he was younger, Dan had a crush on Owen. Now that he is living with him, Owen has never looked hotter. The crush is back in full force. Too bad Dan isn't the kind of guy Owen is into. But even a hint that he is interested might spur Dan to make a move. Unfortunately, Dan is bringing trouble with him, and he doesn't even know it. When Owen becomes a target, will Dan be there in time to save him?

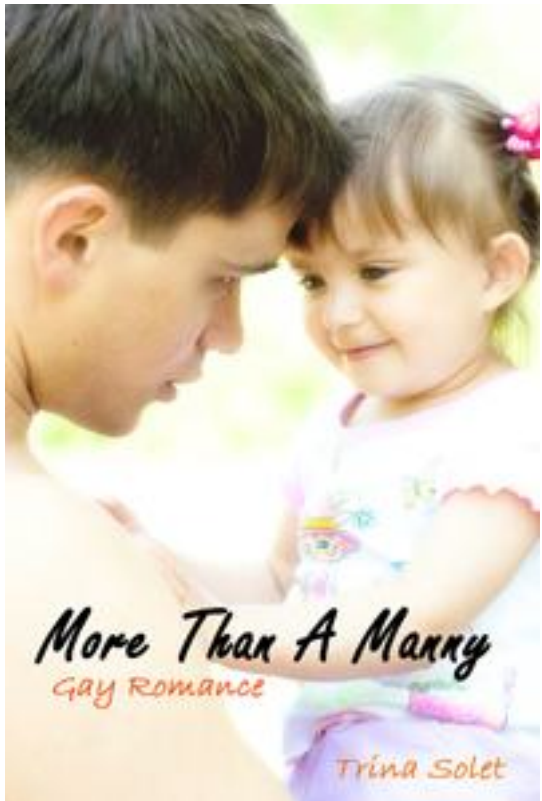
And Manny Makes Three

Mark is a struggling college student who has been working as a nanny for a nice family, but they don't need him any more. Zack has been raising his son, Al, by himself and needs help. Al is a funny kid, and Zack is a funny dad, but more serious issues lurk under the surface. Will Mark be able to deal with these two? And how will Zack and Mark deal with their mutual attraction?



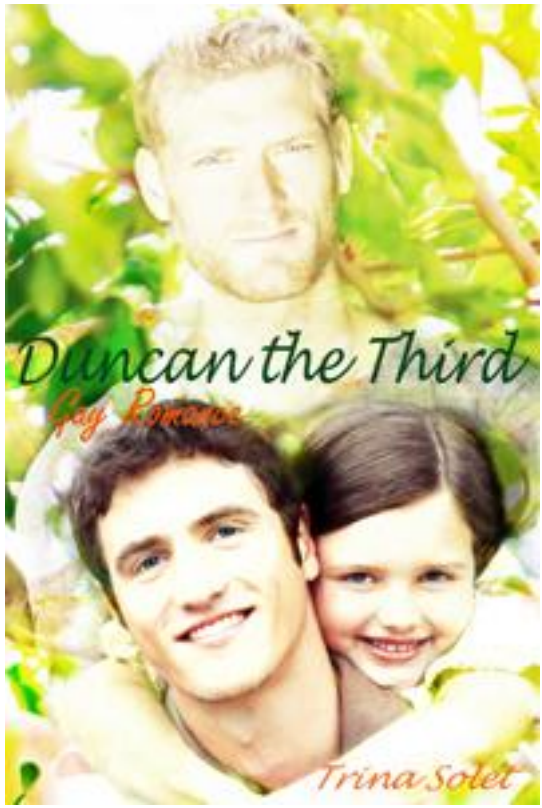
Unexpected Dad

Tyler finds a big surprise waiting on his doorstep. Ready or not, Tyler is a dad. Tyler didn't know he had a daughter until she suddenly dropped into his life. Whether he is ready for her or not, little Julie needs a father. Or maybe two. Tyler and Jake have been best friends, inseparable since college. Now they have to adjust to Tyler's new role as a dad. As Jake helps him cope with being a new father to a little girl, Tyler might be looking at two big changes in his life.



More Than a Manny

A very young, rich widower needs a nanny, but a hot manny would be even better. That's where Nate comes in. Brent is a loving but irresponsible father to two young children from a marriage of convenience. He needs Nate in his life, but how will Nate, a first time nanny, fit into his unconventional household? The kids are a handful, especially little Georgie. Her big brother, Ricky, has a few issues of his own. But Nate is more than ready to take on the challenge and let all three of them steal his heart.

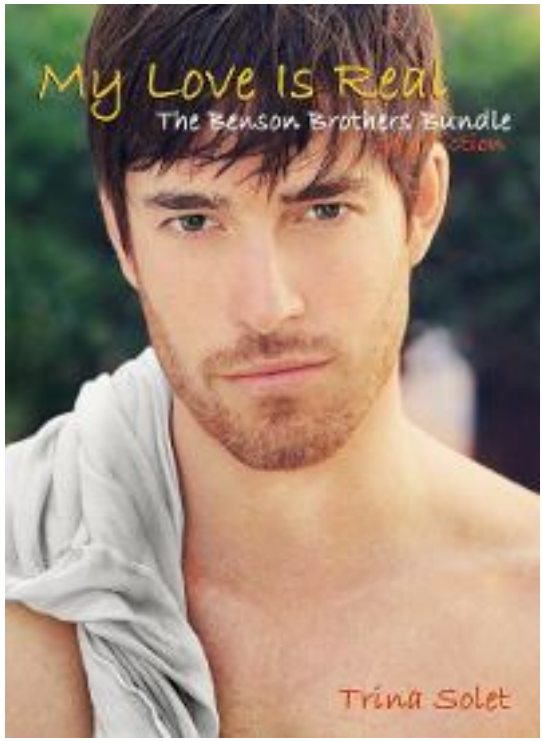


Duncan the Third

Patrick and his little sister, Wendy, have just moved into Duncan's building and that means trouble. Patrick is exactly the kind of guy Duncan can't resist. Together he and his little sister might be the family Duncan has been yearning for but only if he takes a chance and lets them into his heart. Unfortunately, Duncan hasn't been lucky when it comes to relationships. After getting his heart broken too many times, he has sworn off younger men. While Duncan struggles against his attraction to him, Patrick is determined to win him over. As Patrick tries to change his mind, can he also heal Duncan's broken heart?

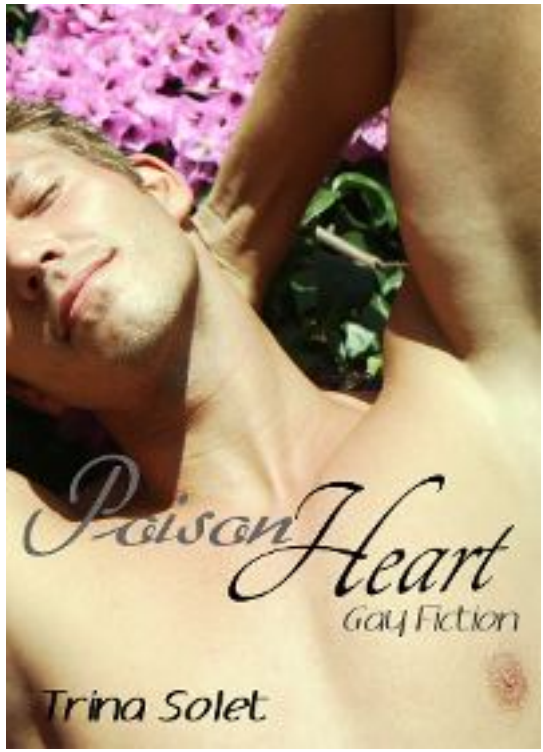
Make It Better

A favor leads to a life changing experience. Ray is willing to do anything for the man he considers his savior. His mission of mercy is Marcus, a young man who can't overcome his guilt over a tragedy in his past. Is Ray making a terrible mistake giving his heart to him, or will his love for Marcus be strong enough to save him?



My Love Is Real: The Benson Brothers Story

For almost a year Sean and Brian thought they were brothers. Sean wants him more than anything, but will Brian ever accept his love? His pride is only one of the obstacles standing in their way. A dangerous man has a claim on Brian.



Poison Heart

Is there anything Vince and Cal won't do for each other? The two of them grew up together and fell deeply in love. They were poor but happy until Cal made a big mistake and ended up in jail. He did it for Vince. To get him out, Vince is willing to do anything. Roland Granger has the power and influence to make Cal a free man. All he wants in return is Vince. Even if Cal never forgives him, Vince is willing to sacrifice himself. Now he has to make sure that Cal accepts this unwanted help. And while Vince is trying to set things right in his own life, can he reunite Roland with a self-destructive young man who loves him?